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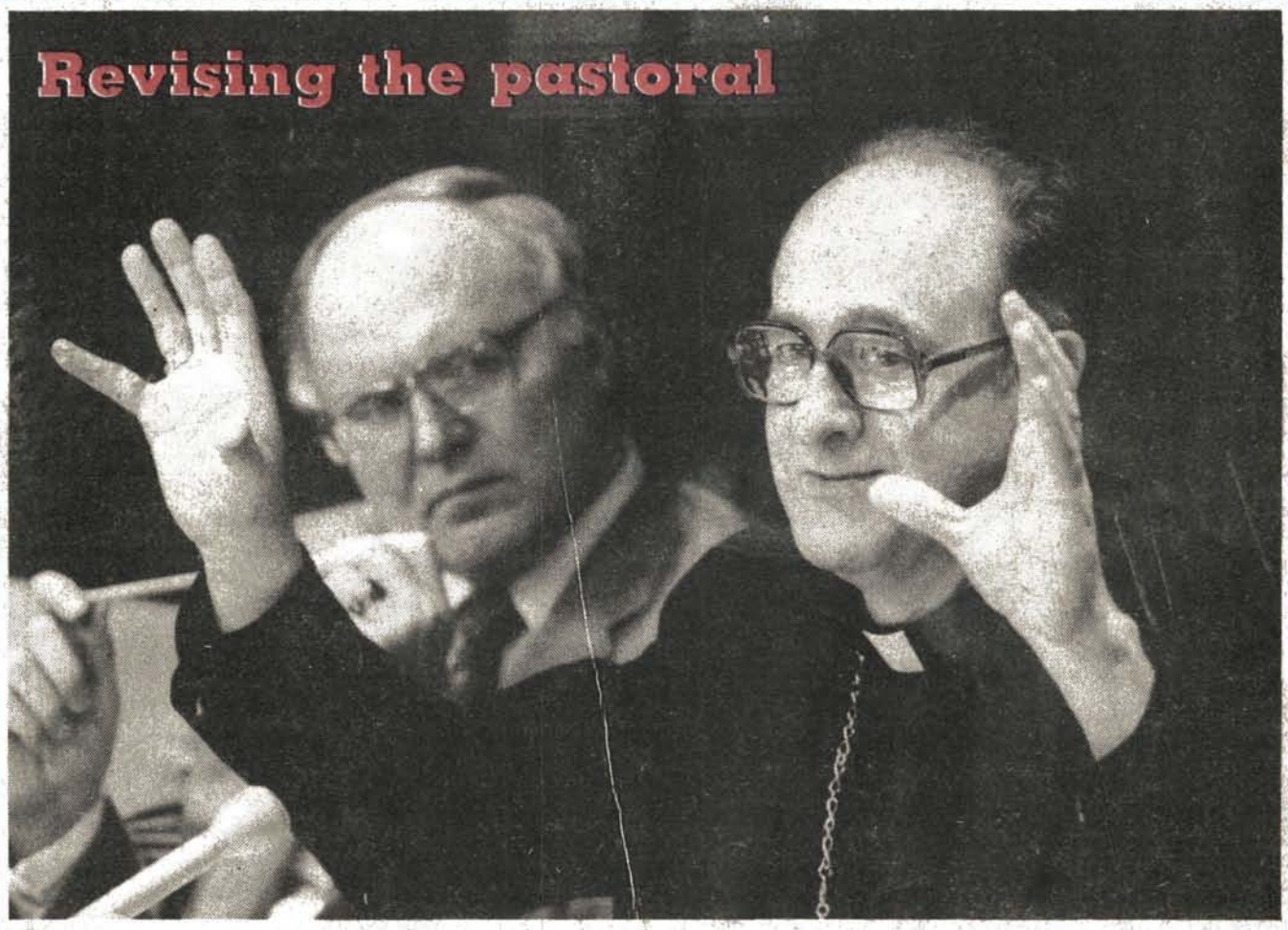

Human rights, economics, & the Trinity

MICHAEL J. HIMES & KENNETH R. HIMES

THE WHITE HOUSE GOES CONDO • ETHICS & THE WANTED CHILD
REINHOLD NIEBUHR, SU[illegible] [illegible]—AND NOW?

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Correspondence

A free man

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In an article on Cuban political prisoners ["Breaking the Silence," February 22, 1985] and later in a letter to the editors, I told about the arrest of Santos Mirabal at age twelve, who allegedly shot a cow with a government weapon, and suggested readers write to Fidel Castro on his behalf. Now, after almost twenty years in prison, Santos Mirabal has been released and is living quietly in Havana with his father. Those who did take the time to write should realize their letters may well have contributed to this happy outcome.

BARBARA E. JOE

Health & frailty

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: Dena Seiden's "The Malpractice Muddle" [January 17, 1986] is a crisply written, well documented, and insightful piece about a problem not likely to get better in American society until something in popular culture changes.

I write a few days after the traumatic explosion of Challenger II. Popular culture, with governmental collaboration, had begun to treat the space shuttle as another technical routine. We forgot the risks inherent in the thing. We forgot, as Ms. Seiden says, our old knowledge "that life is tragic and humankind flawed." In a technically shaped culture that prides itself on having left the once-routine truths of *religion* behind, we are embarrassed when the power and pertinence of those old truths reassert themselves.

Doctors contribute to this false security that underlies the costly litigiousness surrounding malpractice. But we all do, whenever we credit ourselves with the power to perform miracles and license ourselves to forget that we are creatures.

DONALD W. SHRIVER, JR.
President
Union Theological Seminary

The costs of pain

Trenton, N.J.

To the Editors: Dena Seiden ["The Malpractice Muddle," January 17] follows the pattern of many ethicists by placing the responsibility on the victim of the malpractice. One of the author's suggestions is to eliminate payment for "pain and suffering" and only reimburse the victim for actual medical costs. Following that logic the criminal courts should not incarcerate convicted robbers. Rather simply make them give back the money! Surely those who are guilty of a grievous offense, civil or criminal, must take responsibility. It is illogical to put caps on the awards to plaintiffs . . . .

Most people understand and accept the humanity of physicians. Unfortunately, too many physicians and ethicists like Seiden fail to realize that humanity involves accepting responsibility and consequences.

KENNETH S. SZEPESY

Distributive burden

Johnson City, Tenn.

To the Editors: As a trial lawyer who has spent many years defending medical malpractice cases, I applaud Dena Seiden for fairly and objectively addressing the current medical malpractice dilemma in this country ["The Malpractice Muddle," January 17]. Her perception that the rights of those identifiable individuals who have been harmed by the system (negligently or otherwise) must be balanced against the interests of the larger community, is a trenchant one. The article serves to communicate this need to the public.

The tort system that has traditionally disposed of such litigation, is in all but total disarray. Moreover, given its adversary nature, it is incapable of balancing competing interests. Also of import, is the fact that the economic base of the medical profession, alone, is too limited to long withstand the assaults that are increasingly being mounted against it. Economically, the burden is ill distributed. This in itself, is inimical to the public's interests. Without some sort of correction, we are headed like Gadarene swine, headlong, and without restraint, over the precipice and the inevitable collapse of the system.

J. PAUL COLEMAN

Medicine is chancy

Omaha, Nebr.

To the Editors: A few points might be added to Dena Seiden's excellent treatment of the malpractice problem ["The Malpractice Muddle," January 17]. Seiden emphasizes that "penalizing the full community financially, and affecting both its access to care and the quality of its care, in order to deal with the tragedies of some individuals and the failings of others, is neither equitable nor just." But the reasons behind the statement may not be altogether clear, and even the term, "failings of others," may not be entirely apt. An adversarial, fault-finding mechanism distorts the reality that many — perhaps most — of the bad outcomes that occur in health care transactions are simply probabilistic. True, they are "caused," but in the same way that the outcome of a coin flip is caused: the causes are so manifold, and their interactions so complex, that in the practical order those outcomes are largely uncontrollable. Genetic heterogeneity of the human population leads to myriads of idiosyncratic reactions to drugs, diseases, and medical interventions, most of them trivial, but some not. This heterogeneity, when combined with the necessarily limited ability of the physi-

(Continued on page 158)

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'RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH'

"THE WORST, THE MOST corrupting lies," wrote Georges Bernanos, "are problems poorly stated." Especially, one might add, when those problems are real and pressing. Such a problem is the question of free speech and responsible dissent in the Catholic church. And such a poorly stated version of that problem was the full-page advertisement that (finally) appeared in the *New York Times* on Sunday, March 2.

"WE AFFIRM OUR SOLIDARITY WITH ALL CATHOLICS WHOSE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH IS UNDER ATTACK," the ad declared in a three-inch-high headline. Perhaps they are speaking of Cardinal Obando y Bravo, whose radio station has been regularly put off the air by the Sandinistas? Or of Father Renato Hevia, the Jesuit editor of *Mensaje* in Santiago, arrested by Chile's Pinochet, threatened by death squads, and harrassed in his work by police censors? But no. This is an ad supporting the signers of a previous ad, and if its sponsors are at all lucky, it may just provoke enough controversy (and cash contributions) to justify a further ad. . . .

Dear reader, you may be weary of this. Understandably. So are we. Over a year ago, misgivings were expressed here about the original advertisement, a "Statement on Pluralism and Abortion" that appeared in the *Times* at the height of the '84 presidential campaign. Even stronger criticism was expressed here at that time about the Vatican's heavy-handed and counter-productive response, demanding that women and men in religious orders who signed that ad had either to retract their signatures or face expulsion from their orders. When the current advertisement failed to appear as originally scheduled last October, we noted the criticism its widely circulated text had received from sources like the *National Catholic Reporter* and the Leadership Conference of Women Religious. On top of the "calculated ambiguity" of the first ad on pluralism and abortion, the second one heaped a new layer of confusion about Catholics' "right to free speech," a phrase which, we wrote, "covers everything from serious questions of academic freedom to much fuzzier issues of canceled lectures."

The intervening months have not improved the text nor lessened the confusion. When your average *Times*-readers come upon a tabloid-style headline about "Catholics whose right to free speech is under attack," they naturally think of something involving the First Amendment and government power. And when they learn that this "attack" is coming from "segments of the institutional Roman Catholic Church," they may well conjure up the Spanish Inquisition or the Syllabus of Errors. A thought that no doubt crossed the minds of those who designed that headline: hit 'em where it hurts.

But what is at stake here has virtually nothing to do with a right to free speech in the First Amendment sense. It has, instead, everything to do with the conditions of belonging which any association may or may not properly ask of its adherents. Can the army order its generals to refrain from criticizing U.S. foreign policy without civilian clearance? Can newspapers prohibit their political reporters from endorsing presidential

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candidates? Can General Motors dump an executive who starts advertising Volkswagons? In each case, the reasonableness of the restriction on "free speech" depends on its relationship to the nature of the organization — to the military's subordination to civilian control, for instance; or to a newspaper's need for credible neutral reporting; or to an auto manufacturer's interest in boosting its own products.

What is good for General Motors is not, of course, what is necessarily good for the Catholic church. The example is only offered to suggest the problem about a claim like this one from the *Times* ad: "We believe that Catholics who, in good conscience, take positions on the difficult questions of legal abortion and other controversial issues that differ from the official hierarchical positions act within their rights and responsibilities as Catholics and citizens." This sentence has the merit of limiting its reference to abortion (which is where, after all, this whole brouhaha began) specifically to *legal* abortion. We have repeatedly insisted — and at least some of the hierarchy have agreed — that Catholic pluralism in regard to the legality of abortion must be considerably wider than in regard to the morality of it. But do the ad-signers really mean to suggest that Catholics conscientiously differing from official hierarchical positions on *any* controversial issues whatsoever would still be within their rights as Catholics? On the divinity of Jesus? On the centrality of Scripture and sacraments? On racism? On genocide? They might, yes, be within their rights as citizens. But as Catholics?

Why do we make these points? Certainly not because we underestimate the importance of free speech and responsible dissent within the church. Quite the contrary. It is the *New York Times* ad which underestimates that importance. Undoubtedly the many individuals who have signed that ad feel strongly about free speech and dissent — most strongly, probably, about the heavy penalties threatened against nuns and the apparent readiness of some bishops to demand uniformity on the abortion question from Catholic political candidates. But the ad they have signed presents no case for free speech and dissent that is sustainable, not only by standards special to the Catholic church, but by standards pertinent to any organization.

This is a disservice because the crisis is real. Twenty years after the Council, the Vatican is still acting on a top-down theory of church authority and ideological conformity. Perhaps we are overly pessimistic, but actions by Rome that would reprove dissent in even the most painstaking and faithful of theologians seem a distinct possibility. Responding to them will demand courage, but also intelligence and loving fidelity. The case for theological and political pluralism in the church will certainly involve recognizing legitimate differences over abortion, but the case cannot become a mere appendage to the American abortion debate. Likewise, the reply to authoritarianism cannot simply be "anything goes." The theologian's right to dissent is meaningless without the church's right to proclaim. If the church is a community of disciples, it must foster discussion and not close itself to dissent — for disciples are learners. Yet it must also retain the capacity to affirm convictions and give a corporate witness — for disciples are faithful to a teaching.

We do not pretend that these issues are easy to resolve. But they are not made easier by broad-gauged slogans and an unwillingness to admit distinctions. Certain starting points are helpful: the traditional principles of academic freedom; the distinction between central beliefs or fundamental moral teachings and prudential judgments in the legal or policy orders; the differences between scholarly discourse or searching dialogue, on the one hand, and public advocacy or lobbying, on the other; the need for consultation and subsidiarity in ecclesiastical decision making. Catholic dissent and free speech should be defended on grounds that are defensible. We may, alas, have plenty of practice.

HEART OF THE MATTER

February was again the shortest month. But February 1986 will live long in our memory as one of those remarkable interludes that leaves us forever different. We cannot possibly soon forget the valor of the Filipino people, and the democratic revolution they accomplished by the most striking nonviolent means. Secretary of State George Shultz welcomed those events aptly: "The new government has been produced by one of the most stirring and courageous examples of the democratic process in history."

The month began with Pope John Paul II praying at Raj Ghat, the tomb of Mohandas Gandhi. "I wish to reaffirm the conviction," he said then and there, "that with the help of God, the construction of a better world, in peace and justice, lies within the reach of human beings. But the leaders of peoples and all men and women of good will must believe and act on the belief that the solution lies within the human heart."

Within two weeks of that prayer, and inspired by a modern but nonviolent Joan of Arc, the Philippines' national conference of Catholic bishops called on the Filipino people to resist tyranny nonviolently. "We are not going to effect the change we seek by doing nothing. . . . Now is the time to speak . . . the time to repair the wrong." And, "This means active resistance of evil by peaceful means — in the manner of Christ."

When tens of thousands of Filipinos responded by forming a nonviolent human wall between Marcos and rebel troops, it was evident that, as one observer at the time put it, "The people have become a very strong weapon." And after Marcos had fled, the prescribed bloodbath of violent overthrows did not ensue, but rather a remarkable calm akin to the composure Mrs. Aquino had shown so often in her campaign for the presidency. The new government explicitly decreed that there be no "looting, vandalism, lynching, public humiliation or the like of any person for whatever reason." Said Mr. Shultz, "We pay special tribute to Mrs. Aquino for her commitment to nonviolence, which has earned the respect of all Americans."

A very strong weapon. So strong it surrounded and protected the army itself. In a provocative new book *(Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-based Deterrence and Defense*, Ballinger, paper $14.95, 250 pp.), Gene Sharp points out how techniques similar to those used so successfully in the Philippines can be employed not only to oust tyrants, but to dissuade potential attackers from abroad.

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COMPETITION: *What was Archbishop Rembert Weakland saying — and what was Michael Novak thinking — when our cover photo of them was taken?* Commonweal*'s editors were fascinated by the possibilities. Readers are invited to submit imaginative/appropriate captions for this photo. Best suggestions will be published, and winners will receive additional two- or one-year subscriptions.*

He says that the aim of nonviolent civilian defense is to make a society unrulable to would-be tyrants and aggressors by applying massive, selective noncooperation and defiance. "With effort, risks, and costs," he concludes, it is possible for people "to make themselves politically indigestible. . . . That process has already begun."

The model of the Philippines, one of prayer and action, should be emulated elsewhere. It should be taken to heart by the people of Chile. It should cause those outside South Africa to increase their pressure on the apartheid government. Those who speak and act daily for nonviolence in that blood-soaked land are a prophetic, diminishing minority, assailed on all sides. They clearly need both our prayer and substantive action. Finally, the accomplishments of the Philippines' bishops, speaking in concert for human rights, and unrestrained by the Vatican's mediating caution, should become a model for other such episcopal bodies. Then February 1986 will not have been just a remarkable interlude but, like Lent itself, a fertile plateau from which there is no turning back. That is the *corazón*, the heart of the matter.

HAGGLING PRO & CON

The war against the Nicaraguan government is escalating, and President Reagan's request for $100 million in aid for the *contras* — nearly four times the allocation Congress approved last year — doesn't begin to tell the story.

The administration's argument is not without substance: the Sandinistas have moved closer toward the Soviets. The army uses Soviet-made helicopters and other supplies, and depends heavily upon foreign military advisers, 7,500 of them from Cuba. The Nicaraguan government has taken recent repressive measures against the Roman Catholic church (including closing its radio station) and against the press and the public — by reinstating "emergency" powers. Clearly, something must be done, but what?

It is obvious to everyone that tossing $70 million to the *contras* for military assistance won't bring about a Sandinista defeat — the administration's still unstated, but transparent, goal. The $27 million in nonlethal aid designated by Congress last year left most of the *contras* hovering demoralized in Honduras, still undisciplined and answerable to charges of torture made by Amnesty International. Sandinista strength is not responsible for these problems.

For victory, the *contras* would need not only more American military advisers and the new airfield now being built in Honduras — the sixth constructed by the U.S. army in the last three years — but a whole lot more. . . . More? How much more of what? It is the open-endedness of this scenario that should lift every American eyebrow. Just what *is* the long-range plan for U.S. involvement in Nicaragua? Is it as unspecified and subject to prolongation as it seems? The administration must be made to answer the question precisely, and before one penny of aid is considered for transfer from the defense budget this year. Otherwise, how will the story differ next year when the president begins his fundraising?

Secretary of State George Shultz is worried that we (the U.S.) will have to live with a dangerous "Soviet and Cuban bases on the mainland of Latin America." But that is only half of what worries many Latin American nations. They fear the rampant militarization of Latin America and the encroaching intervention by both superpowers: the U.S. as well as the Soviet Union. We should listen to their concerns.

Instead, Mr. Shultz dismissed the proposal made to him in February by eight Latin American foreign ministers — endorsed by thirteen Latin American nations, the European Economic Community, and Japan. Doesn't this proposal deserve the serious attention now being devoted to the plea for increased *contra* aid?

The Caraballeda plan (named for the city in Venezuela where it was signed January 12) calls for negotiations: to remove all foreign military advisers; suspend foreign military maneuvers; end support for guerrilla armies; respect the self-determination and territorial sovereignty of each country; freeze the region's military buildup; and respect political pluralism and human rights. These goals sound like those Mr. Shultz listed in his talk to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, March 2, but his goals would only limit Nicaragua and its allies. The Caraballeda plan would prohibit U.S. advisers, maneuvers, aid, and arms as well. Why not? This is as it should be.

Diplomacy has its risks. But it offers not only the highest gains — regional peace — but requires the least monetary expenditure and toll of human life. Mr. Reagan has simply misplaced his effective haggling skills: they belong not on national television, to swell public sympathy as pressure against Congress, but at the bargaining table.

The Philippines

STILL THE GAUNTLET

MRS. AQUINO BEGINS TO GOVERN

THREE DAYS AFTER the February 7 election, the speaker of the Batasan Pambansa, the Philippine National Assembly, swung his game leg up the several steps which led to the podium elevated high above the floor of the Assembly, and with a heavy bang of his gavel declared that the Batasan was convened for its constitutionally appointed task of

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counting the votes in the contentious presidential election.

Outside the modern Batasan building, hundreds of the supporters of Cory Aquino gathered on broad lawns to keep a vigil. As the debate inside dragged on into the late evening hours, some on the lawn wrapped themselves in light blankets and slept. Others sat about small fires, talking and listening to guitar players. Food vendors materialized selling corn, meats, soft drinks. Behind a sound truck with a statue of the Blessed Virgin on top, a knot of people stood praying the rosary.

For an instant that evening it was possible to stray from the road of hard political logic and believe that perhaps Aquino could actually win in the Batasan count, that truth, honesty, righteousness — all heavily on Aquino's side — could somehow prevail against the forces of raw political strength that President Ferdinand E. Marcos had marshaled inside the hall. "Cory's going to win, isn't she?" asked a young college student, her eyes bright with the hope which had characterized Aquino supporters during the two-month campaign.

But by the following morning the cold reality of politics prevailed. Cory was not going to win. The Batasan, controlled by a large Marcos majority, would bull its way forward to confirm the false tallies from the regional voting centers. More importantly, overnight, without a single act by a Filipino, the balance of Philippine politics had altered. For on February 11, President Ronald Reagan had declared in Washington that the election had been fair, despite cheating on both sides, and that in the best interest of democracy and a two-party system, vanquished Aquino should work with the triumphant Marcos. In effect, the Americans were withdrawing their support for Aquino, which admittedly had been indirect, and were placing the crown of legitimacy on Marcos.

The Reagan statement had a stunning effect. The Marcos people, who had stage-managed a small anti-American demonstration outside the Manila Hotel when Senator Richard Lugar was condemning election fraud at a press conference on February 10, were suddenly brimming with pro-American sentiments and suggesting that Aquino join a newly devised Council of State.

The opposition people were devastated. They had come to believe that the Americans were committed to dumping Marcos. Didn't the Americans goad Marcos into calling the snap election? Could it have been mere chance that all those war records damaging to Marcos came dribbling out of the U.S. archives just weeks before the election? Was there any relation between NAMFREL, the well-funded citizens' group which fought so valiantly — and vainly — to prevent Marcos from stealing the election, and the CIA, which had bankrolled a similar group with the same name in a previous Philippine election? Now Reagan was back supporting Marcos. Sneered a Filipino businessman, "The Americans always force a man out on the plank, but before they push him off, they faint."

But Reagan was not allowed to remain unconscious very long, and once again a shift in an American position caused a significant movement in Filipino politics. Congressional outrage in the U.S. at the massive fraud and intimidation which won Marcos the election forced Reagan to reconsider. He once again began pushing Marcos toward the end of the plank, denying Marcos the legitimacy he needed.

It is difficult to explain simply why everything the Americans do and say about the Philippines has such tremendous impact in Manila. The interaction goes beyond the usual need of a former colony to seek validity from the former colonial power. The U.S. and the Philippines share a bond which was welded together by the fire of the Second World War and not broken by Philippine independence in 1946.

A kinship exists. Every Filipino, it seems, has a relative living somewhere in the States. English is the common language: the language of instruction in schools, the legal language, the language of debate in the Batasan, the language of the newspapers and television, the language of love songs.

Other key Filipino institutions and mythologies are intertwined with America. The Filipinos share the American faith in education as a means for upward mobility. Respect for freedom of the press — neglected during the martial law period — is high. Filipino parents send their brightest child off to law school because Filipinos are as obsessed as Americans with litigation and legality.

Nearly forty years after independence, a statehood movement still has a life of its own in the Philippines. Even the committed core of Philippine nationalists, who deplore the Filipino reverence for all things American (known locally as the "little brown brother" syndrome) admit that perhaps 40 percent of the people in any plebiscite would vote for statehood. Anti-Americanism is seldom encountered in the Philippines except in certain urban intellectual circles, and even there it is muted and bears no resemblance to the strident forms of anti-Americanism found, say, in Latin America.

The American withdrawal of support from Marcos was an essential and necessary ingredient in engineering Marcos's downfall. But all the power and influence of the Americans was not potent enough, in itself, to force Marcos out. The people knew, instinctively, that Marcos's show of legitimacy was false. In the days following Marcos's victory in the Batasan, Aquino and her associates continually pounded the theme of the illegitimacy of the Marcos election. The Catholic church was convinced; the bishops issued a letter condemning the election as a fraud. "Marcos has lost the business community, the middle class, the common man," said opposition Senator Eresto Maceda a week after the election. "The church and the Americans have deserted him. All that remains is the military." The military took another day to get organized, and three days later Marcos was gone.

The suddenness and ease with which he departed startled even the Aquino people who had been designing a long and elaborate plan of civil disobedience to wrest power from him. In one sense the struggle was curious because Marcos and Aquino were battling over the captaincy of a damaged and sinking ship. The Philippine economy is a wreck. If logic prevailed, the loser of the election should have inherited the Philippine economy. In 1983, with its foreign debt standing at $25 billion, the Philippines declared a moratorium on the repayment of some foreign loans. The IMF rescued the coun-

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try from receivership. In return for standby credits, the IMF imposed austerity measures on the Philippine government, limiting, for example, money supply, government spending, and budget deficits. While mending the Philippines' balance of payments ailments (good news for bankers), this bitter IMF pill pushed the economy deeper into crisis (bad news for workers). The gross national product declined 5.3 percent in 1984 and 3.9 percent in 1985. Couple this with a 2.8 percent increase in population each year, and the depressing results are roughly a 7.5 percent decline in per capita income in 1984 and a 6.3 percent decline in 1985.

Real unemployment, as opposed to the lower official numbers published by the government, is estimated by economists at between 15 and 20 percent. Underemployment, as dreadful a problem as unemployment, is estimated at between 20 to 40 percent. Half the people of the Philippines do not have sufficient work and survive only through the remittances of Filipinos, working both in the U.S. and the Middle East, and the extended family system which cushions the burden of individual poverty.

In the last two years, clouded by IMF regulations and blown by political instability resulting from the murder of Ninoy Aquino, new economic activity has been nearly nonexistent. Domestic capital formation was *minus* 37.9 percent in 1984 and *minus* 14.5 percent in 1985. The root of the problem was investment confidence. The political uncertainties of the country kept bankers and investors sitting on their checkbooks. Any Filipino with cash to invest headed straight for opportunities abroad.

Will Aquino be able to turn the economy around? Perhaps. She enjoys the warm enthusiasm and confidence of the business community — a curious fact considering Marcos kept calling Aquino a Communist. But no matter how much enthusiasm the business community has for her, it will, as prudent investor, wait and see whether Aquino can fashion political stability out of the present uncertainty. Most economists see flat growth this year and a slight upturn next, if Aquino succeeds in calming the nation.

But even encouraging upward movements of the economists' bar graphs will not immediately improve the simple lives of the nation's millions of poor people who turned out *en masse* to cheer Aquino when she toured the provinces during the campaign. That tour reinforced in her, a woman born to the wealth of sugar plantation ownership, her compassion for the poor. She now hopes to initiate projects to provide all the small towns of the nation with clean and safe well water as a simple symbolic gesture of her commitment to the poor.

The task of rebuilding the economy, as difficult as it may be, may be easier than the task of constructing a solid political base for her new administration. Aquino has worked a number of impressive political miracles in recent months. She formed a union with Doy Laurel, the leader of the opposition party, UNIDO, a party long in competition with Ninoy Aquino's own opposition party, Laban. Opposition parties in the Philippines squabble with the intensity and bitterness of half-brothers. Only the hatred of Marcos kept them together. While personal fondness and political respect grew between Laurel and Aquino during the campaign, they now have more than a campaign to manage: they have to run a government.

Laurel has been appointed prime minister, and other oppositionists, including members of Ninoy's party, have been given key positions. No one doubts that Aquino can command the assistance of a wide and talented group of advisers, but the troubling question is whether Aquino can assemble her group quickly enough and whether she will be able to provide firm leadership over these eclectic — albeit talented — allies.

Sympathetic critics suggest that Aquino will replace the Marcos group of cronies and family members, who dominated and destroyed the Filipino economic and political fabric, with a group of Aquino cronies and family members. After all, Aquino generated support from business and financial groups because Marcos, the provincial upstart, had cut this traditional elite out of power and influence. Could the Aquino revolution be merely the restoration of the old elites? Or will the stunning and stimulating victory of simple democracy lead to new politics in the Philippines? It's too early to say. They are only now sweeping up the confetti.

BARRY HILLENBRAND

(Barry Hillenbrand, a correspondent for Time *based in the Persian Gulf, covered the Philippine elections.)*

Of several minds: *David R. Carlin, Jr.*

ON NAMING THE MOON

THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

A WITTY FELLOW who lives in my home town recently made a public proposal that a great international contest be conducted to find a name for the moon. To those who say that the moon already has a name — namely, "the Moon" — he replies that calling the moon "the Moon" is like calling your dog "Dog" or your cat "Cat." These aren't names at all; they're titles for classes in which our individual dogs, cats, and moons fall; and to suppose that they are names is to betray an extremely vulgar quality of imagination. If Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus can have moons with such picturesque names as Io, Titan, and Oberon, why shouldn't Earth also have a fancy name for its moon?

(Come to think of it, "Earth" itself isn't such a classy name. It's as though we live on a planet called "Soil" or "Dirt." No wonder we have so little planetary self-respect. This perhaps explains why the arms race is out of control. After all, who cares about blowing up a planet with so ignominious a handle?

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Perhaps we need a second name-giving contest.)

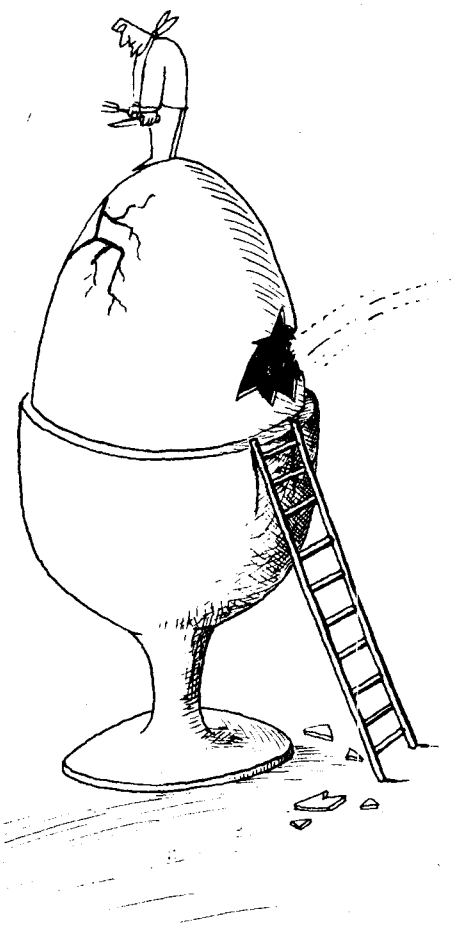
But the name-giving contest which really concerns me is one that has to do with a sociological, not an astronomical, phenomenon — a phenomenon that suffers not from having a dull or rude name but from having no name at all. Some examples, all of them drawn from American experience during the last twenty or thirty years, will show what I have in mind.

1. Great progress has been made in recent times in opening interesting and high-paying occupations to women, who before this breakthrough could not practically aspire to anything more lofty than schoolteaching. One of the unintended consequences of this equalization of the sexes has been a deterioration of the intellectual quality of new public school teaching recruits; for the old system, unfair though it may have been to women, guaranteed that the brightest among them had no place to go but into the classroom.

2. Recent progress, both in medicine and in our system for paying for medical care, has enabled us to keep alive millions of people who earlier would have died for want of new medications and surgical techniques, or for lack of means to pay for this life-saving treatment. No question about it: this is one of the great accomplishments of the twentieth century. But one of its results is that a substantial portion of our national income is now consumed in restoring increasingly large numbers of the aged sick, not to health or social utility (for these are things they will never see again), but to a lingering condition which falls somewhere between life and death, where they wait, shades of their former selves, for their *nunc dimittis* from some ailment which, for the moment at least, remains mercifully beyond the reach of medical science.

3. Twenty years ago race relations in America underwent a great and edifying legal, political, social, and cultural revolution. For the first time in the nation's three-hundred-fifty-year history, blacks were invited to enter the mainstream of national life. But glorious as this moment was, one of its results has been the loss of solidarity which used to exist, under conditions of forthright oppression, within the black community. Blacks who were ready for new opportunities seized them, gaining further education, better jobs, higher incomes, and improved housing and neighborhoods. But those left behind were deprived of the leadership, example, and support of those who had moved up and out. Today black America is increasingly divided between those who are making it and those who are falling ever further behind; the last state of those falling behind is even worse than their state in the days before the devils of racism were swept out of the house in the 1960s.

What general name do you suggest we give to these ironic catastrophes? It might be said that we already have a name for them: the Law of Unintended Consequences. But what I have in mind is something worse than a mere unintended or unanticipated consequence. I mean that genuinely progressive developments produce results that are not only surprising but downright disastrous. According to an old theological mystery, God can extract good out of evil. What I'm talking about is a historical mystery according to which evil is produced out of good.



We might call it the principle of the wheat and the tares, except that according to the Gospel parable the tares, while they grow up *with* the wheat, do not spring *from* the wheat.

Perhaps the principle could be named after certain distinguished theorists who have reflected deeply on the ambiguity of social and political action. It might, for instance, be called the Berlin Principle, after Sir Isaiah Berlin, who has remarked that it is impossible to maximize all goods simultaneously; or the Dewey Principle, after John Dewey, who said that there never can be an end to our problems, since the solving of one problem creates a condition in which new problems arise; or the Niebuhr Principle, after Reinhold Niebuhr, who had a rare genius for discerning the evil that is inevitably mixed with every good in the realm of public action.

At all events, some handy name is needed so we can quickly refer to the principle the next time some damned fool conservative denounces a social reform purely and simply because it has had negative side effects — or the next time some damned fool liberal denounces as reactionary anyone who calls attention to the harmful side effect of some favorite reform.

Evaluating social reforms is not simply a matter of discovering that they have good or bad effects. It's a matter of recognizing that their effects have of course been both good and bad, and then estimating which set of effects has been greater. And being a thoroughgoing social reformer does not involve merely producing a reform and then sitting back in a quasi-eternal seventh-day rest, pronouncing it permanently good. It involves getting to work again on the eighth day (one day of rest and complacency ought to be granted the successful reformer), identifying and trying to correct the evil consequences of your latest good deed.

DAVID R. CARLIN, JR.

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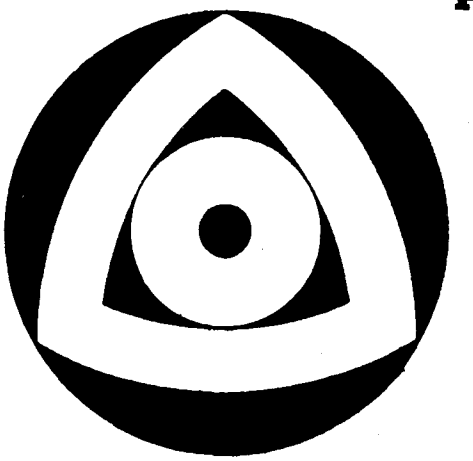

Rights, economics, & the Trinity

MICHAEL J. HIMES &
KENNETH R. HIMES

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH was slow in coming to an endorsement of the rights that were promoted by the European revolutions of the nineteenth century. It was not until 1963 in *Pacem in Terris* that Pope John enumerated those human rights that the church endorsed. Once the idea of human rights took hold, however, it became central to the social teaching of Roman Catholicism. David Hollenbach, a perceptive commentator on the church's social teaching, has suggested that the cause of human rights is now the "prime focus" of the "ethical teaching and pastoral strategy" of the papacy in the realm of justice and peace.

Like other aspects of its teaching, the human rights position of the Catholic hierarchy is subject to critical scrutiny. In the case of social pronouncements, politically conservative voices have frequently been raised in dissent. One of the more serious reservations voiced about recent Catholic statements on social questions concerns its use of the language of "rights" to discuss economic goods like food, shelter, employment, and minimum income. This challenge has been pressed by figures of some prominence in the American Catholic community. lic community.

During a speech last fall at the University of Notre Dame, William Simon, former Secretary of the Treasury, spoke of the problems he has with the idea of rights as found in the pastoral letter on the American economy presently being written by an episcopal committee under the direction of Archbishop Rembert Weakland. Criticizing governments that put bread before freedom, Simon noted that "a lot of contemporary Catholic thinkers and activists have become infatuated with one of the central ideas of these miserable systems; the idea of 'economic rights.' " This idea is in error for two reasons: it distorts the meaning of human rights, and it does nothing to help the poor. According to Simon, in contrast to human rights — which erect checks against arbitrary state power — economic rights inevitably lead to the further empowerment of the state. He insists that, "Instead of being free, independent, moral, and economic actors, citizens become wards of the state." Simon then points to Nicaragua, the Soviet Union, and Poland as examples of "what happens in countries where economic rights are proclaimed." He concludes that "the language and imagery of economic rights is filled with a subtle disdain for human freedom and creativity."

William Simon is mistaken, we believe, in saying that economic rights necessarily lead to people becoming wards of the state, and that including economic claims among a roster of human rights entails a "disdain for human freedom and creativity." But these are matters we will not explore here. Our interest is not in political argument but theological comment. On this level we find Simon's speech wrongheaded, but understandably so. The problem with the bishops' economic rights-language is not their embrace of it, but the lack of preparation they have given for employing it. The bishops have not provided, and cannot presume Catholics already have, a foundational political theology to support the ethical claims made in the present draft of the economics pastoral. The use of economic rights by the bishops, or for that matter any comment on economics at all, may seem foreign to many in the Catholic tradition. Therefore, it is imperative that the foundational role of political theology in relating faith and justice be clarified in the pastoral so that the derived ethical claims from the letter will be more readily understandable and compelling.

Political theology is not a specialization within the theological discipline. It is an expectation, brought to the doing of theology, that the symbols of religious faith carry public meanings. Uncovering these public meanings is one of theology's and theologians' primary tasks. The attention this task has currently aroused is not due to mere theological trendiness, but to the need the church experiences to balance an existentialist

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theology that rightfully emphasizes the radically personal meanings of religious symbols. Far from being a reductionist method which claims that religious language is disguised social, political, or economic discourse, political theology insists that the full significance of religious language be recognized. Political theology takes William James's pragmatic principle with utmost seriousness, that if something is true, it makes a difference to someone, somewhere, somewhen. Political theology requires us to examine the full range of the consequences of claiming that a religious symbol is true. The someone, the somewhere, and the somewhen which will be affected by the symbol's being true or not are human beings engaged in multiple relationships at particular times and in particular places. Thus religious symbols do not only resonate within the sanctuaries of souls; they also give shape to and insight into persons acting publicly with others in the real world.

The ministries of the word, delineated by Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* following the 1974 synod of bishops, are four: evangelization, catechesis, liturgical preaching, and theology. Each is engaged in juxtaposing the symbols of faith with the experience of contemporary believers. This juxtaposition of symbol and experience illumines both: the symbol gives form and context to experience, and experience gives new insight into the content of the symbol. This correlation of symbol and experience for the sake of mutual illumination has been at the heart of the development of Christian doctrine from the New Testament era to the present. Political theology, as we have come to know it today, emphasizes the need not to impoverish this work of correlation by unduly limiting the range of human experience which must be interpreted by the great Christian symbols, and which in turn enriches our insight into the very depths of those symbols.

By the same token, political theologians must not restrict their attention to only a few of the powerful symbols of the Christian tradition. Their responsibility, as that of all theologians, is to the full panoply of Christian theology. And while some symbols are more central to the tradition than others, and may therefore be assumed to correlate with a wider range of experience and yield richer insight into the heart of the tradition, no religious symbol of any significance is devoid of public meaning. Recent decades have witnessed a revised sensitivity to the political dimension of the theological task. But attempts at a consciously *political* theology have confined themselves to the exploration of a certain few symbols drawn from the tradition, notably eschatology and christology. Unquestionably important as these attempts have been, the most central and accordingly fruitful of all the great symbols of our tradition has been largely neglected in contemporary political theologies. We refer, of course, to the Trinity.

No belief is more central to the Christian tradition than the Trinity. It has not been merely an element in credal statements, but classically the very form of such statements, the organizing principle of Christian faith since the fourth century. And yet, since the time of the Protestant and Catholic reformations, the Trinity has gone largely untreated and unexplored: when the theological agenda is determined by polemics, what is accepted by everyone is discussed by no one. When the Trinity is presented in preaching and catechesis as information — odd but authoritative — about the inner life of God, the central Christian symbol is robbed of its depth and transformative power.

This is the central Christian insight: "to be" and "to love" are synonymous.

The doctrine of the Trinity is an elaborate spelling-out of the most basic Christian metaphor for God, represented in numerous ways in the Synoptic Gospels and by Paul, and finally given simple but classic expression in the Johannine documents: God is *agape* (1 John 4:8, 16). "God," i.e., the Mystery which grounds and surrounds all existence, is pure self-gift. This is the extraordinary claim which undergirds the Synoptic Gospels' linking of the commandments to love God and to love the neighbor as being exactly equivalent, and allows the Fourth Gospel to collapse the two into one new commandment: "Love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one another" (John 3:34). We are urged to "be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," and when we discover in the preceding verses that the Father's perfection consists in his not making a distinction between the good and the wicked, on both of whom he makes the sun shine and the rain fall (Matt. 5:43-48), the purity of the self-gift which is named "God" is significantly revealed. As Augustine argued again and again, God loves because that is the divine nature, not because creation deserves it. In parable after parable, statement after statement, the meaning of "God" is revealed as the one who is perfectly self-giving.

The classical doctrine of the Trinity was an attempt to understand the freedom of that self-gift. If God is *agape,* then some recipient of the divine self-gift is necessary. If that recipient is other than God, a creature, then creation is necessary for God to be God. But such a position is not only incipiently pantheistic, it ends by making God less than *agape*. The foundation of created being would then have to be divine *eros,* for God's love would necessarily seek fulfillment in creating. But if God is *agape,* and the nature of *agape* is to be entirely free, God, being God, must be pure self-gift, without any necessary reference to creation. God must eternally be giver and receiver and gift. "God" is the name of the relationship of an endless perfect mutual self-gift: in our traditional imagery, the Father gives himself totally to the Son, the Son gives himself totally to the Father, and the Spirit, proceeding from both, is the bond of that pure agapic love. In frequently used patristic imagery, God is the lover, the beloved, and the love between them. "God" is the name of a relationship and the poles of the relationship. God is not a person, if by that we mean one pole of a relationship. God is the very fullness of relatedness.

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This is the central Christian insight: "to be" and "to love" are synonymous. To hold onto life is to lose it; to give it away is to see it become everlasting life. This is not an ethical ideal. Rather, the oft-repeated statement of the Synoptic Gospels is a description, a corollary of the claim that being and loving are identical. This is the heart of the doctrine of the Trinity.

A POLITICAL THEOLOGY of the Trinity provides the deepest foundation possible within the Christian tradition for the rejection of the individualistic bias which can distort the ethic of human rights as it is commonly understood. In order to draw out the political theological meaning of the Trinity, two consequences of the doctrine must be noted.

First, if being and loving agapically are identical, as the trinitarian doctrine claims, then existence does not precede entry into relationship. It *is* relationship. Being *is* being related. Coming into communion with others is not subsequent to existence. Being at all is being with. So central is this to the Christian tradition that the principle is both derived from and elevated into the meaning of "God." For God is not the one, the absolute, the alone. "God" is community, relationship, Trinity, *agape*. Aristotle observed that the human person is intrinsically political. In this sense, Christianity teaches that so is God.

Second, the *imago dei* motif, which is often the theological base for the use of rights-language in contemporary Catholic social thought, is transformed by bringing it into connection with the central Christian insight given metaphorical expression in 1 John 4:8, 16, and theological elaboration in the doctrine of the Trinity. For if God is triune, if God is the perfect relationship of the lover and the beloved and the love which unites them, then to maintain that the human being is created in the image of God is to proclaim the human being capable of self-gift. The human person is the point at which creation is able to acknowledge gratefully the divine self-gift and to respond by giving oneself in return. The fundamental human right is the right to give oneself away to another and ultimately to the Other.

Christian revelation thus sheds a broad and dazzling light on the true nature of humanity, precisely by its understanding of the nature of God in whose image we are made. Unless we recover the import of the Trinity for thinking about God, we will not think wisely about the human person.

What a far cry, this Christian understanding of the human person, from the Enlightenment understanding of so-called human nature. In the Hobbesian war of all against each, the goal of human life is the achievement of sovereign independence. Entry into any relationship, save that of dominance, lessens one's independence and so undermines one's humanity. Rights are the primitive property of the individual and must be preserved from society's encroachment. To protect the most important rights, one may have to sacrifice certain of one's freedoms by entering into a social contract clearly determining the relationshhips which will exist between the individuals forming the society. At least in theory, however, the perfectly free, fully human being, will be totally independent, and absolutely self-determining. The "God" who undergirds such an ethic is the sovereign Individual. Whatever the "God" of the Enlightenment might have been, he was clearly not triune. Throughout the eighteenth century, the defenders of what was, on the one hand, presumed to be orthodoxy emphasized divine sovereignty in order to defend God's independence, while religious liberals like the deists, on the other hand, in order to defend the universe's independence, stressed God's non-intervention in the smooth-running mechanism of creation. Both accepted God as removed and largely uninvolved. It was an era of religious individualism, and strikingly unitarian.

The Christian trinitarian understanding, in contrast, is communitarian, both theologically and politically. The individual does not precede the community. The individual and the community give life to one another: as the individual is more truly intelligent and free, more truly human and so more completely self-gift, the network of relationships in which the individual exists is furthered and enriched; the broader and deeper that network of relationships, the more truly human the community and the individual. Thus, humanity and relatedness are directly proportional. For humanity requires free and intelligent participation in being, and, according to the Christian tradition, the ground of being is perfect relatedness. Each relationship brings with it responsibilities. In order to carry out responsibilities, rights arise. The fundamental responsibility is to give oneself away as perfectly as possible. The fundamental right is the right to do so.

Any accounting of human rights that stresses, as its foundation, freedom as non-interference rather than freedom for self-gift in relationship, freedom for participation in community, is a skewed understanding of the ground of human rights. The mistaken grounding of rights by Hobbes, Locke, and others, highly significant in the making of a particularly American mindset, is understandable, given liberalism's agnosticism on the nature of the human good. But Christianity acknowledges no such agnosticism. It stresses the necessity of community for humans to grow in the image of God, to engage in acts of self-giving that can become truly reciprocal. The liberal tradition starts with the individual; here is the significance of the observation that liberalism is the political equivalent of unitarianism. In contrast, a trinitarian vision sees the individual and community as co-existent. There is no being apart from relatedness; God is the One only because God is the Three. A political theory shaped by the Christian tradition can only understand the person as an individual in community. The most fundamental human right is the right to exercise the power of self-giving, the opportunity for entrance into relationship, for deeper participation in the life of the human community.

All other rights are derivative. All consequent rights are claims to the preconditions for community, the locus of self-giving. Denying instrumental rights that secure necessary conditions for human community seriously weakens the opportunity to exercise the fundamental right of self-giving which is the expression of our nature and dignity.

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IN ORDER TO safeguard and enhance the foundational human right, it is necessary to develop strategies which foster human community. Roman Catholicism has employed the language of human rights to articulate the framework within which a just strategy for establishing community must operate. As the second draft of the episcopal letter states: "The basic demands of justice are spelled out in greater detail in the human rights of every person which are affirmed by Catholic social teaching. These fundamental rights are prerequisites for a dignified life in community" (# 83). The moral weight of any human rights claim, then, is contingent upon the relation of the good that is sought to human community, the historical locus and creative expression of self-giving persons. That community fosters and sustains the distinct but interrelated levels of human personhood — the physical, intellectual, aesthetic, moral, religious — which interact to constitute the human person. Serious deprivation on any one of these levels can threaten the integrity of human community. Thus the list of goods that can be appealed to as an appropriate object of human rights claims is extensive.

A human right, however, cannot be an unlimited claim. We do not have a moral claim to everything and anything. There is a need to distinguish between those goods which are basic conditions for the possibility of a community composed of self-giving persons, and those goods which are less pressing, less directly related to the fundamental right of participation in the life of self-giving. In making such necessary distinctions, a serious danger to be avoided is modern society's inclination to utilize the state with its authorized political authority to adjudicate truth-claims about human fulfillment.

One way of addressing the matter might be to rely on Barrington Moore's thesis of "the unity of misery and the diversity of happiness." Briefly put, those evils which threaten human community are more easily agreed upon than enumerating those goods which foster human happiness. Consequently, rights to overcome, or protect against, the sources of misery can be the legitimate concern of government with less controversy than if the state were to define a person's life plan. Hunger, disease, physical violence, excessive control of free expression, association and movement, and other such human miseries can be warded off or limited by the establishment of certain rights.

The Christian tradition provides a communitarian critique of liberal ideology. Liberalism sees the end of politics as focusing on the free individual; but freedom is too narrowly defined in this perspective. The communitarian vision offers an outlook where the basic idea is that people accept their interdependence both as empirically and normatively true, thereby enhancing a shared sympathy and purpose, and accepting responsibility for the well-being of one another and the community. The Christian grounding of rights-language seeks to avoid the individualist bias of liberal dogma by placing rights in the context of community. This is achieved by recognizing that self-giving arises from and creates a setting of communal relations. It must not be forgotten that in this framework there is true mutuality. Not only is the other diminished by the denial of his or her rights, but I am likewise lessened because of the absence of full participation in communal life. If a person or group is hindered in entering deeply into the life of the community, then all the other members of the community are hindered in actualizing their humanity.

Our relational nature, therefore, constitutes both a promise and threat. It is a promise in that the possibility of true communion is congruent with the nature of our being, indeed, with the nature of all being, subsisting as it does in the Triune God. But it is a threat insofar as failure to establish community entails a dimunition of human life, not only for the marginalized, but for those who prevent the inclusion of all in participatory community. This is the profoundly theological reason why liberation theology, unlike some Marxist positions, should underscore that the ending of oppression is for the sake of both the oppressor as well as the oppressed. This emphasis on community flows from the political theology of the Trinity. Human rights have a social dimension because self-giving leads to mutually enriching communal relationships. Human rights, in this schema, are viewed as claims to those goods which allow people to act upon the responsibility to be self-gift. There is no convincing reason why in themselves economic goods should be ruled out as legitimate objects of human rights claims.

THERE ARE TWO commonly held objections to the theory of social and economic rights. First, there is the question of practicality — whether we can realistically claim that all people have a right to things like food, health care, clean water and education. And second, there is the issue of history — how is it that these particular rights were unknown to, or unclaimed in, earlier ages.

Is it true that we simply cannot meet a broad range of social and economic claims? To some extent the counsel of professionals in various fields such as health, agriculture, finance, etc., is required to answer this problem. But several words of caution must be raised. While it is true that some of the rights-claims of recent vintage may be excessive, not all of them are self-evidently so. We should be careful about dismissing certain rights because they call for major reform of the status quo. What may have to give way is not the voice of those denied their rights, but the economic and political structures which make justice "impractical." This is not to settle the nettlesome question of how best to overcome the injustice, but to point out that it is the ethical legitimacy of a claim that makes the struggle to overcome the problem a moral imperative.

It is not true to say that earlier generations knew nothing of economic rights.

In situations of extreme scarcity, the language of rights

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reminds us that the reason no one fails in her or his moral duty to help another in distress is not that the deprived person has no claim but that circumstances have prohibited the securing of the right. We do not conclude that the right is non-existent; rather we call the circumstances extreme. So if a society, acting through its government, decides that as the result of an exceptional situation — e.g., a drought — the right to food cannot be fully implemented, we should not conclude that the right does not exist. What we can conclude is that the exceptional circumstance is just that — exceptional. It is not an acceptable state, and it must be remedied because it is offensive to a human right. The point, then, is that we should hesitate before granting too much persuasive power to the practicality argument. The issue of practicality raises a legitimate concern. But it is a caution against excessive rights-language, not a decisive argument opposing such rights, including economic rights.

With regard to the second objection, the history of rights, it is not true to say that earlier generations knew nothing of economic rights. Thomas Paine, in his essay "Rights of Man," defended the idea of welfare rights such as old-age benefits and child support. It is true that our awareness of human rights, like all knowledge, is subject to historical process. Rights take shape with the passing of time as people pay attention to emerging conditions in society. To call something a right is to say that it is acknowledged as a necessary empowerment for people to participate in community. What constitutes that necessity will vary from age to age. In earlier times, the right to health care was limited to such public health measures as quarantine. But today, since society is able to provide considerably more care, thanks to remarkable advances in medicine, personnel, and resources, we alter our understanding of what is the extent of the right to health care. As human effort and resources come to affect the conditions for participating in community, the instrumental rights themselves undergo change. In medieval Europe, no one would have claimed a right to formal education as necessary for entering into human community; in twentieth-century America, however, it is inconceivable that a person would be denied a basic formal education and still be said to have the same ability as others to participate in community.

Human rights help delineate the claims we have against others and the community. Given the nature of some claims, the government, representing all of us in a given society, strives to meet the claims made by individual members of that society. Government may, and should, acknowledge other groups' rights to act on behalf of the community. Yet the magnitude and complexity of some human rights, especially when a whole group seems deprived of a specific right, leads us to conclude that the agent for satisfying such claims will frequently be the national government. This applies to economic rights as well. It is so because no smaller group can properly respond to the duties generated by the right itself. There are clearly situations where the response of individuals and even voluntary associations are woefully inadequate to the human rights violations in question.

Some claims, of course, are such that governments conclude they are unwilling to live up to their responsibility, or simply deny it exists. The human right is not invalidated, however. The appeal must then go out to the wider community — all fellow persons. The deprived person or group makes claims on other people in the name of shared humanity. This is precisely what has happened in cases of Russian dissidents such as Anatoly Shchransky and Andrei Sakharov, as well as Southeast Asian "boat people" and starving Ethiopians denied basic material benefits. These victims appealed to other nation states, not in the name of citizenship but in the name of humanity. And aid to these people was, and is, not an act of supererogation but simple justice. Human rights are ultimately claims of everyone against everyone for some assistance in the establishment of participatory community. Obligations to meet the duties imposed by a rights claim fall upon those best able to assume them, and in most cases the assumption is that the national government is the agent suited to protect the rights of those living within its borders. This is not an absolute principle, but a good rule of thumb.

TO SUM UP, human rights are moral claims to some good which *can* be provided, and which *should* be provided in light of the moral ideal of establishing communities where people can mirror the trinitarian life of self-giving. Such communities require a basic level of material well-being, and national government is the usual means through which each person fulfills part of the duty to safeguard the human rights of our brothers and sisters. The extent of an economic right can be debated. Just as we debate the extent of the rights to free speech or religious expression, or the right to life itself, so, too, we can debate the extent of what a right to food, shelter, or health care entails. But the foundation of such rights-language is theologically strong and the appropriateness of such language in the Catholic tradition is clear.

Complaints from conservatives like William Simon about the use of economic rights in Catholic social teaching may stem from a variety of motives, but the critique does point out a need. The extent to which the American bishops employ the biblical witness in the draft of the economics pastoral is notable. It is also clear, however, that the draft letter relies on the communal wisdom of the church as found in numerous other sources. The letter exhibits a thorough and balanced command of previous church social teaching. Thus, the document illustrates a manner of theological and ethical reflection that combines two major resources within Catholic tradition: the Bible and magisterial teaching.

What is lacking in the letter is an exposition of the way that the *central symbols* of Christian faith should be interpreted so the public meaning of faith is brought into clearer focus. The bishops need to bring the great symbols of the tradition into dialogue with the economic and ethical themes of the pastoral. There are rich resources in our heritage for deepening, supporting, and supplementing what the bishops espouse. A constructive political theology is a necessary correlative to the fine scholarship already evident in the drafts of the letter.

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The White House goes condo

NICOLAUS MILLS

TWO YEARS from now, when Ronald Reagan leaves office, we will be saddled with an enormous national debt and a bloated military establishment. But whether American institutional life will be significantly different from what it was in 1980 is not clear. The big "if" is privatization. If the president succeeds in moving the country down the road to privatization, he will have paved the way for the conservative revolution he has been so anxious to bring about. The lowered expectations the president wants us to have for what government can do will be neatly balanced by privatization of the institutions that matter most to us.

The kind of privatization the president sees as basic was made clear in December when the administration proposed selling off the Federal Housing Authority, which over its history has provided low-cost mortgage insurance for 51 million home-buyers and in 1984 produced a profit of $9.4 million. The president withdrew his FHA sale proposal in the face of heated congressional opposition, but in the 1987 budget, the administration returned to the same theme. Among the assets the budget lists as being for sale are Bonneville Dam, Dulles National Airport, the Elk Hills oil reserve, and the National Weather Service's satellites. There is nothing subtle about such a strategy. In Britain the Thatcher government has been selling off everything from council housing to British Telecom. It is the equivalent of a family trying to make ends meet by selling off the silver it inherited. Such a step will do little to reduce the forces that got the family into debt (in Reagan's case tax cuts plus the military budget), but for a period it will bring in added revenues.

The key to the president's effort is not, however, one-shot privatization but a subtler long-term privatization. Where one-shot privatization involves the direct sale of government assets, long-term privatization is a matter of creating a situation in which — often through nothing more than a combination of neglect and tax policy — private interests are given unchallenged political and institutional dominance in an area where the government has previously accepted major responsibilities. The significance of this long-term privatization becomes clear when we look at where it has already become an issue:

● *Housing*: At a time when public housing starts are down to a trickle, the president's 1987 budget proposes ending all rental housing development grants, freezing federal subsidies for local public housing projects, and stopping inflation adjustments on federal housing subsidies. Although most studies judge that there are upwards of two million homeless people in the country and HUD's *Report on the Homeless and Emergency Shelters* puts the figure at between 250,000 and 350,000, the administration is, in essence, proposing that the government get out of housing and let the market settle matters. The administration's proposals would assure the poor of a chance to bid, with the help of vouchers, for the worst available housing, and it would give a small number of lucky public housing families the opportunity to buy their apartments. But everyone else would be left as before. Cities such as New York would continue shelling out $1,500 to $2,000 a month to provide a family with temporary housing, and nothing would be done to help the 2.5 million Americans who lose their homes each year, or to stem the estimated 500,000 low-rent apartments that disappear annually as a result of co-oping, landlord abandonment, and demolition. Nor would the poor be the only ones to suffer. With the median price for a new home more than $84,000, the middle-class house-buyer would be hurt by the housing squeeze that privatization has only made worse.

● *Education:* Here the core of the administration's thinking on privatization is represented by Secretary of Education William Bennett, who argues, "The betterment of oneself in college is still largely a do-it-yourself kind of operation." The administration advocates a do-it-yourself system in which, as former Reagan Secretary of Education T.H. Bell observed, "The wealthy will be the only ones able to attend schools where the tuition is high." The 1987 budget would continue government policies which over the last five years have seen federal aid to education drop by 17 percent. The president's new budget asks for $1.4 billion less in aid for college and university than the year before, and in states such as New York that means a loss of $800 a year each for 30,000 college students. For minority students, who just a year earlier found the aid they were receiving from public colleges down 12.4

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percent, the Reagan privatization message could not be clearer. But it is not only minorities who are losing out. So are the colleges. Many are already feeling the pressure to turn to students who can pay rather than maintain a blind admissions policy. With college expenses for a child born in 1986 expected to top $100,000 for four years at a private institution, the country is, as the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has warned, moving toward "a two-tiered higher education system," one for the poor and another for the rich.

● *Health Care:* The key to the new privatization trend in health care has not, however, been so much specific Reagan policies — like fixed-cost reimbursement for Medicare — but the administration's creation of an environment in which there are fewer and fewer limits to where the laws of the marketplace should be extended. The nation's health care system is now being revolutionized by for-profit hospital chains in which the big four — Hospital Corporation of America, American Medical International, Humana, and National Medical Enterprises — already own or manage 12 percent of the country's hospitals and are leading a movement in which, by the middle 1990s, ten giant medical firms are expected to provide 50 percent of our medical care.

The significance of this privatization has already been felt by the poor who have no medical insurance, and the new unemployed, who have lost both jobs and health coverage. "Patient dumping" — the process of moving the poor from private to public hospitals — has begun to reach epidemic proportions in such cities as Chicago, where Cook County Hospital, which once received only 60 to 70 patient transfers a month, now gets more than 500. But patient dumping is not the only problem privatization is causing. As a dual medical system develops, public hospitals get not only the poorest patients, they also get saddled with the kinds of services the for-profit hospitals do not want. "The for-profit hospitals avoid services that are not profitable, even though they may be of use to the community," Dr. Arnold Relman, editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, argues. "They like short stays and a lot of diagnostic studies. They don't like patients who need labor-intensive care, like burn patients, or the chronically ill, or elderly patients. That's expensive." For already burdened public hospitals, the result is added costs and more certainty that the patients they serve are those with nowhere else to go.

● *Prisons:* As with hospitals, it is the climate of public opinion the administration has helped create, rather than specific policy, that is paving the way for privatization. The administration's get-tough sentencing attitude toward criminals has contributed to the rise in the nation's prison population, but the real key is the $10 billion per year that the country is spending on nearly 750,000 offenders. Privatization has already gone beyond support services to include custody for prisoners, and the National Institution of Corrections predicts that by 1990 we will see as many as a dozen state or federal contracts for operating entire prisons. A bill introduced in the Senate in 1984 by Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) even provides the means for facilitating the prison privatization process. The D'Amato bill encourages private prison ownership by providing "sale lease-backs" of new facilities to the government and giving the builders of new prisons tax breaks as well.

To a public anxious to avoid spending scarce tax dollars on new prisons, the idea of dumping the responsiiblity on private investors is especially appealing. As the head of Behavior Systems Southwest, one of the new prison corporations, candidly acknowledges, "People don't want to examine their trash, and prisons, as your average person looks at it, are your social trash." The danger comes from the fact that in operating prison systems, private investors are not promising to make them better, only cheaper. Many of their savings would come from not paying guards the police-level salaries and pensions their unions have won for them, and from making sure the inmates they house are those amenable to inexpensive care — offenders willing to work and able to live in medium- or minimum-security facilities. In addition, although private prisons own have every reason to want their prisons to be secure, they have no reason to make successful rehabilitation an aim. The future depends on a situation in which crime remains hi , judges hand out long sentences, there is a recidivism te the government cannot cope with, and the public wishes to wash its hands.

WHERE WILL PRIVATIZATION finally lead? In a recent *New York Times* column, Russell Baker joked, "Darlings, the privatization going on in Washington is just too much." Then he offered a satiric picture of the retired president and his wife buying a suite in the new fifty-story White House Tower that Donald Trump is building at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. The danger is, however, that we won't take privatization seriously enough or realize it has the capacity to transform the country. Once in place, especially if Gramm-Rudman goes into operation, privatization will be extraordinarily difficult to undo. After it is sold, a Bonneville Dam is not going to be bought back by the federal government. A student who could not afford the private college his or her abilities merited is not going to return to that college at age forty.

To make matters worse, the political privatization the president favors now has its equivalent in the privatization that has become a life-style for middle-class America. We are a nation in which those who can afford it spend more and more time locked away in private worlds. We see this privatization in children for whom omputer games have become an after-school substitute for friends and sports. We see it in cities, where one cannot walk down a street or ride a bus without encountering someone with ear phones and a Walkman. Most of all, we see the new cultural privatization in the VCR boom. There are now more than 20 million VCRs in use, and they are on their way to making home rather than the theater the place to watch movies. Such changes do not by themselves guarantee that the president's privatization efforts will succeed. But they do the next best thing. They create a constituency for whom political privatization is a natural extension of choices already made in their daily lives.

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THE HUMAN FAMILY UNDERSTANDING OTHER PEOPLE

(formerly Books for Brotherhood)

Children's and Young Adults' List

EACH YEAR a representative committee draws up a list of books for children and young adults, books that best portray relationships among people of different origins, races, and religions. The complete list, selected from books published from August 1984 through July 1985, is meant to cover a wide range of ages, interests, and readability. The following selection from the complete list is presented by the publishers named below.

Ain't Gonna Study War No More, *by Milton Meltzer. Harper & Row, 1985. $12.50*
As long as war has been waged, people have resisted and tried to make peace. Meltzer traces the history of the anti-war/pacifist movements in America, back to the colonial period, through two centuries of American history, and including the Vietnam era. His heroes are ordinary men and women who risked their livelihoods and lives to put an end to the insanity of war. (11-14)

Back Home, *by Michelle Magorian. Harper & Row, 1984. $13.89*
Just after World War II, Rusty, a young teenager, returns to England after spending four years as an evacuee in America. Her accent, her clothes and her wonderful memories make her seem arrogant. She quickly becomes an outsider with her family and at her strict school. A good picture of that time in history plus the added elements of growing up, family strife and adjusting to the conflicts of two cultures. (12 and up)

The Big Way Out, *by Peter Silsbee. Bradbury, 1984. $11.95*
A story of how a mentally-ill parent can disrupt and terrify a family. Paul's father, after a nervous breakdown, was released from a mental hospital before he was well. The cycle of abuse and erratic behavior begins again, until Paul and his mother flee across the country to safety with relatives. A readable and realistic account of how a parent's collapse can affect a young adult's life but, more, how family support for each other can pull the members away from total disaster. (12-14)

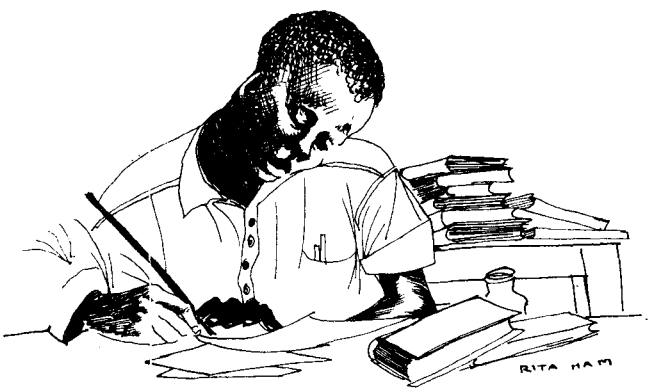
The Black Americans: A History in Their Own Words 1619-1983, *by Milton Meltzer. Crowell, 1984. $12.98*
The author has revised from his earlier works on Black Americans and expanded information to include the historical happenings through 1983. Information is taken from primary sources: diaries, newspaper articles, letters, etc. Subjects quoted include a variety of Blacks known and not so well-known, and there is an interesting dialogue cited with contemporary author Maya Angelou. (11 and up)

Breaking Tradition: The Story of Louise Nevelson, *by Natalie S. Bober. Atheneum, 1984. $12.95*
Recounts the life of Louise Nevelson, from her birth in Russia through her move to America, her struggles as a woman in the "man's world" of art and her recognition, at the age of fifty-eight, as one of America's great sculptors. Ms. Nevelson's life is a tribute to her credo, ". . . let's break tradition." Her story is an inspiration and a joy to read. (12 and up)

Brothers and Keepers, *by John Edgar Wideman. Holt, 1984. $15.95*
Wideman, brought up in the Pittsburgh ghetto, became a college professor and novelist; his brother Robby, ten years younger, became a drug addict and thief, and is serving a life sentence for murder. The writer tries, through memories of family life, talks with his brother in prison (some of the narrative is Robby's) and pondering on his own earlier rejection of his Black background, to understand the brothers' different fates. He finds no one answer, but his quest is moving and provocative. (14 and up)

CF in His Corner, *by Gail Radley. Four Winds, 1984. $9.95*
Fourteen-year-old Jeff must care for seven-year-old Scott while their mother works. Jeff knows something is wrong — and he finds out that Scott has cystic fibrosis. His mother does not want Scott to know, but Jeff feels the truth would help his little brother and tells him about the disease. This has unexpected consequences, but the family draws strength from this crisis of truth-sharing. (12 and up)

Celebrating Life — Jewish Rites of Passage, *by Malka Drucker. Holiday, 1984. $11.95*
Details about social customs and their relationship to Jewish beliefs and religious observances give meaning to Jewish rituals in marriage, death, birth or even divorce. It contains a glossary, an appendix of Jewish prayers (in English) appropriate to certain events, and affords a sensitive and clear picture of Jewish cultural and religious beliefs. (8-12)



The Ceremony of Innocence, *by Jamake Highwater. Harper & Row, 1985. $10.95*
Three years after the death of her husband, Far Away Son, Amana, lonely and near starvation, is found begging among the white men by Amalia, a good-hearted French-Cree prostitute. Amalia comes to the rescue again as Amana is abandoned by her white lover shortly before the birth of their daughter, Jemina. But ultimately this is the tragic story of the struggle of people caught between two cultures — Amana, a mother trying to hold on to the Indian traditions, and her daughter, Jemina, who is drawn into the white world. (14 and up)

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Child of War, *by Mary Ann Sullivan. Holiday, 1984. $10.95*
There is no "happily ever after" ending to this powerful novel of the struggle in Northern Ireland. Thirteen-year-old Maeve is drawn into the conflict when her little brother, wounded by gunfire, dies in her arms. After she serves as an IRA lookout for the bombing of a Protestant boy's home, Maeve is torn by many conflicting emotions as her childhood dissolves in the tragic cycle of hatred, violence and revenge. (12 and up)

China Homecoming, *by Jean Fritz. Putnam, 1985. $12.95*
Jean Fritz's fictionalized account of her growing up as the daughter of American missionaries in China became the wonderful novel, **Homesick: My Own Story.** She returned to her beloved China, as an adult, fifty-five years later, and has written of that journey with love, insight and humor. This book is autobiography, travelogue and a personal look at the social and cultural history of China over the last half-century. (11-14)

Circle of Gold, *by Candy Dawson Boyd. Scholastic-Apple, 1984. $1.95 (paper)*
Mattie and her twin brother, Matt, live with their widowed mother who has to support the two children by holding two jobs. Mattie's effort to win her mother's affection results in a prize-winning essay and her growing understanding of love. An original paperback. (8-10)

Do Lord Remember Me, *by Julius Lester. Holt, 1985. $13.95*
Rev. Joshua Smith looks back on his long life, from days as a boy preacher and healer through years as a traveling evangelist in the South. He remembers how he learned to survive segregation with dignity, and how his sons — one who fled North and one who became a civil rights activist and married a white woman — have led vastly different lives. "The new song . . . was freedom . . . Would he be the only one to remember the simple melody of survival?" A moving story of the generations of a Black family striving for dignity and freedom. (14 and up)

Dogsong, *by Gary Paulson. Bradbury, 1985. $11.95*
Influenced by old, blind Oogruk, Russel Susskit, an Eskimo teenager, shuns the ways of modern life. Instructed in the "old ways," he leaves his village on a solitary dog run across the mountains and tundra. during the journey, he exists by living off the land and he develops a deep appreciation of nature and eventually understands Oogruk's teachings. An absorbing story interwoven with mystical elements. (10-14)

English Creek, *by Ivan Doig. Atheneum, 1984. $15.95*
In this long coming-of-age tale which takes place over one summer in 1939 in Montana, Jick, 15, describes events in English Creek where his father is the Ranger. It seems to Jick that the summer will never end. The author manages to evoke the happy mood of everyday encounters with friends, family, and neighbors who, along with Jick, enjoy life in a place of great natural beauty. (15 and up)

Fly Free, *by C.S. Adler. Coward-McCann, 1984. $10.95*
Although somewhat simplistic, or even dramatic, in presenting its case against child abuse, this story of quiet and sensitive Shari emerges as a study of the psychological hurt physically-abused children suffer. Both thirteen-year-old Shari and her young mother seem to be victims in this story of senseless rage against a child. (11-13)

Paula K. Lazrus Library of Intergroup Relations Selected by . . .
Edith G. Selig, Supervisor
Joseph Benkovitz, Librarian, Springfield Gardens High School
Bertha Cheatham, Associate Editor, School Library Journal
Ruth Rausen, Coordinator of Young Adult Services, The New York Public Library
Barbara Rollock, Coordinator of Children's Services, The New York Public Library
Roslyn Rubinstein, Head of Young Adult Division, Central Library, Queens Borough Public Library
Carol Wadsworth, Librarian
Brooklyn Public Library, Midwood Branch

Gavriel and Jemal: Two Boys of Jerusalem, *by Brent Ashabranner; photos by Paul Conklin. Dodd, Mead, 1984. $10.95*
Jemal, a Palestinian Arab, and Gavriel, an Israeli Jew, live less than a mile from each other in Jerusalem, but remain separated by the long-standing conflict between the Arabs and the Jews over the establishment of the Jewish state. This book reviews the background of the conflict, the bitter wars which resulted in tension, hate and misunderstanding. But Jemal and Gavriel, who have never met, go about their daily lives mainly unaffected by the gulf in understanding. It is they and other young people who must solve the conflict, says the author. (8-10)

Geri, *by Geri Jewell with Stewart Weiner. Morrow, 1984. $13.95*
Geri Jewell, comedic actress, has always been an entertainer. This biography traces her early life, complete with her struggles, battles, and misadventures with cerebral palsy, through her "discovery" by Norman Lear, who casts her as a character of the television series, **Facts of Life.** Upbeat, funny and poignant. (12 and up)

The Hanukkah of Great-Uncle Otto, *by Myron Levoy; illustrated by Donna Ruff. Jewish Publication Society, 1984. $10.95*
Hanukkah is coming and Joshua's Great-Uncle Otto recalls his early, happy boyhood days in Germany before Hitler "came with his ugly, lunatic hate"; when his father explains that freedom, faith and kindness, like candles on the menorah, spread — one light becomes many lights that can never be lost or damaged. With Joshua's help, Great-Uncle Otto tries to make a menorah like the one that was lost many years ago, but gives up in the attempt. Eventually, Joshua finds a way to complete it, thus recreating the past and strengthening the bond of love in the family. (8-10)

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How My Parents Learned to Eat, *by Ina R. Friedman; illustrated by Allen Say. Houghton Mifflin, 1984. $12.95*
"In our house, some days we eat with chopsticks and some days we eat with knives and forks. For me, it's natural." To explain why this is so, this quiet story tells of the meeting of a Japanese school girl with an American sailor stationed in Yokohama. John is afraid to invite Aiko to dinner because of their different ways of using eating utensils. John wants to marry Aiko and learns to eat with chopsticks. Aiko takes lessons from her uncle on how to handle a fork in a Western-style restaurant. Everything turns out all right in the end when Jack proposes and they agree to teach each other how to eat. "That why . . . some days we eat with chopsticks and some days with a knife and fork." (6-9)

In Kindling Flame, *by Linda Atkinson. Lothrop, 1985. $13.50*
The remarkable life of Hannah Senesh, who grew up as a Jew in Europe amidst the virulent anti-Semitism and rise of Nazism of the 1920s and 1930s is told through her diaries and the writings of friends and family. Hannah emigrated to Palestine in 1939, but returned on a rescue mission to save her fellow Jews in her native Hungary. She was captured and executed in 1944. Her life story speaks eloquently not only of her courage and commitment, but also of the horrors of the times in which she lived and died. (12-14)

In the Shadow of the Wind, *by Luke Wallin. Bradbury, 1984. $11.95*
In 1835, Caleb McElroy and Pine Basket are both sixteen. Pine Basket's people, the Creek Indians, have been driven out by white settlers; the once dense forests are depleted for buildings and ships. Indian raids and attacks by whites become common. Despite the bloody wars that separate their people, the two teenagers fall in love. The flavor of the region, the speech of the peoples, and the spirit of the time, have been caught and beautifully drawn in spare, moving language. (14 and up)

In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson, *by Bette Bao Lord. Harper & Row, 1984. $9.89*
When ten-year-old Bandit Wong changes her name to Shirley Temple Wong, she is ready to set sail from China with her mother to join her father in Brooklyn in the "Beautiful Country." Her efforts to adapt to life in America are often humorous, but she also experiences the pain of loneliness and prejudice. At last it is through baseball that she becomes part of the American dream. She is included in the playground game, quickly becomes a devoted Brooklyn Dodger fan and finally gets to meet her hero, Jackie Robinson. (8-12)

The Kite Song, *by Margery Evernden. Lothrop, 1984. $10.25*
Eleven-year-old Jamie, whose dead father had been violent and whose mother starved to death, is convinced that everything is his fault, including his inability to read. Difficult but warm relations with his half-brother's family; his older cousin Clem, a Vietnam veteran with a false leg who loves kites and poetry; and his teacher in a special class, help him build on his real strengths, face his past, and learn to read. With respect for each character, the author creates a memorable tale. (10-14)

Life Was Meant to Be Lived: A Centenary Portrait of Eleanor Roosevelt, *by Joseph P. Lash. Norton, 1984. $25.00*
A fine introduction to the life of Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) by her long-time friend. The difficult role of a wife and mother in the early 20th century changed during Eleanor Roosevelt's lifetime. Her own desire to accomplish something worthwhile without being in her husband's political shadow and which required her emergence from her mother-in-law's domination is evident here. In her later years she became the much-respected delegate to the United Nations — and through her integrity, compassion, and intelligence, one of the most admired and best-loved Americans who ever lived. Many photographs give the book special appeal. (14 and up)

Lindsay, Lindsay Fly Away Home, *by Stella Pevsner. Clarion (HM), 1983. $10.95. Archway, 1985 (paper) $2.25*
American-born Lindsay has lived abroad — most recently in India — almost all of her seventeen years. When sent to live with her Aunt Meg near Chicago, she resents separation from her Indian boy friend and finds it difficult to relate to American teenagers. Gradually, she learns to work and play with a variety of people and also finds her true home as a family secret is unveiled. (11-14)

Making Room for Uncle Joe, *by Ada B. Litchfield. Albert Whitman, 1985. $9.25*
Dan's Uncle Joe is retarded, a victim of Down's Syndrome. When the school in which Joe lives closes, he is sent to live with Dan, his parents and sisters. At first the adjustment is hard, not only for the family, but also for Joe. But with time, patience and love, Joe becomes a vital, participating member of the family. (7-9)

Motown and Didi: A Love Story, *by Walter Dean Myers. Viking Kestrel, 1984. $12.95*
Didi's dream of going to college and getting out of Harlem starts to fall apart as her mother's mental state deteriorates and her brother Tony turns to heroin to solve his problems. When an angry Didi goes to the police to inform on Touchy, the pusher whose dope is destroying her brother, her life becomes endangered. Motown, who lives in a nearby abandoned building after a life in and out of foster homes, is drawn into Didi's battle against Touchy. Gradually, out of their struggle to survive, hope returns to both their lives and a tender love story unfolds. (12-14)

Move Over, Wheelchairs Coming Through, *by Ron Roy. Clarion, 1985. $12.95*
Tammy is twelve and has cerebral palsy; Liz, also twelve, has spina bifida; fifteen-year-old Mark has muscular dystrophy. These three young people and four other handicapped youngsters are profiled in this straightforward, yet lively book. The reader will be amazed and moved by the courage, determination and love for life of these young people, and the dedication, strength and love of their friends and families. (9-11)

The Moves Make the Man, *by Bruce Brooks. Harper & Row, 1984. $12.89*
Essentially a book for young adults, the story reveals the relationship between two thirteen-year-olds, one obsessed with truth and the other, Jerome, the first Black in his southern junior high, whose survival depends on shading the truth at times. Both Bix and Jerome change perceptions in this sophisticated tale involving basketball plays and life. (12-14)

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My Brother's Keeper, *by Israel Bernbaum. Putnam, 1985. $16.95*
Israel Bernbaum, who escaped from Warsaw just before the ghetto walls were erected, tells the story of the Warsaw Ghetto and its destruction by the Germans, in a series of haunting and dramatic paintings reproduced here. Accompanying the artwork is the artist's own commentary. The total effect is an unforgettable picture of the magnitude and horror of the Holocaust. (all ages)

Nima: A Sherpa in Connecticut, *by Elizabeth Fuller. Dodd, Mead, 1984. $14.95*
The author and her husband on a trip.to the Himalayas met Nima, a teen-aged Sherpa guide suffering from tuberculosis. They invited him to their Connecticut home for six months' medical treatment and recuperation. This account of Nima's encounters with American culture — and flashbacks to the Fullers' experience in Nepal — is sometimes moving, sometimes amusing, and often thought-provoking. (14 and up)

One-Eyed Cat, *by Paula Fox. Bradbury, 1984. $11.95*
On his eleventh birthday, Ned Wallis is given an air rifle, but his father puts the gun in the attic because he believes Ned is too young for it. Ned gets the gun that night and fires it. When a one-eyed cat appears, he believes he is to blame. He tells a lie, and his guilt feelings result in strained relationships with his mother, school friends and others. But finally he is able to share his fears with his mother. A moving, sensitive story for readers who will relate to Ned's dilemma. (10-14)

The Serpent's Children, *by Laurence Yep. Harper & Row, 1984. $12.89*
A strong female character is the protagonist in this story set in 19th century China. The rebellion against the Manchus by the warring factions among the rural people, who face famine and death to fight for freedom, ends with a note of hope — one son escapes to the Golden Mountains, the United States. An interesting insight into Chinese history. This may be the first of a trilogy by the author. (10-12)

The Short Life of Sophie Scholl, *by Hermann Vinke. Harper & Row, 1984. $10.95*
In Hitler's Germany where no free expression was allowed, Sophie Scholl, her brother Hans and a few friends formed the White Rose, an underground organization of students printing and distributing leaflets alerting the German people to the evils of the Nazi regime. Taken from Sophie's own letters and diary and the recollections of those who knew her, this is an unforgettable portrait of a young woman whose spirit refused to be crushed by Nazi terror. She fearlessly faced her execution fulfilling her own words: "With all those people dying for the regime, it is high time that someone died against it." (12 and up)

Someone Special, Just Like You, *by Tricia Brown; photographs by Fran Ortiz. Holt, 1984. $11.95*
Photographs of handicapped nursery-school children doing the things children like to do — eating, smelling flowers, playing with toys, swimming — showing the common delight in life shared by all kinds of children. Simple text is in large print. A bibliography by Effie Lee Morris enhances the usefulness for teachers, parents, and librarians. (4-8)

Stories for Children, *by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1984. $13.95*
Many of these stories have appeared in earlier Singer collections: "The Fearsome Inn," "Zlateh the Goat," "Mazel and Shlimazel." The selections have the characteristic humor, religious and folkloric qualities associated with Singer, who is a perfect storyteller spinning tales for reading or telling. (8 and up)

Strings: A Gathering of Family Poems, *selected by Paul B. Janeczko. Bradbury, 1984. $11.95*
A collection of funny, wise, sorrowing, disappointed, but mostly loving expressions by such modern poets as John Updike, Donald Hall, Mary Oliver, Robert Bly, and Anne Sexton. Parents, wives, husbands, sisters, brothers, cousins, and so on, tied up in the metaphoric strings of family life, receive their tributes from their poetry-writing relatives. (14 and up)

We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the 19th Century, *edited by Dorothy Sterling. Norton, 1984. $22.50*
Two million women were enslaved in the South in the decades before the Civil War. For the first time the eras of slavery and reconstruction are seen through the eyes of these women, from the ordinary to the famous. This is a a rich, absorbing portrait that demonstrates the humanity and accomplishments of Black women through diaries, letters and interviews. The fresh glimpses into the past that these documents provide will move any reader and will put to rest the old stereotypes of Black women under slavery. (14 and up)

We Don't Look Like Our Mom and Dad, *by Harriet Langsam Sobol; photos by Patricia Agree. Coward-McCann, 1984. $9.95*
Joshua and Eric live with the Levins, and they are a family. Both children are Korean-born, though from different parents. Through photographs and a simple text, readers discover that the Levins keep the boys informed of their culture and the circumstances of their adoption. They ask questions about their biological parents and why they look different from their adoptive parents. They are proud of becoming American citizens, while keeping their Korean middle names. The Levins are not a typical family in their neighborhood, but most importantly, "they share work and share love." (7-10)

For the complete "Human Family" book list write to:
The National Conference of Christians and Jews, 71 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003

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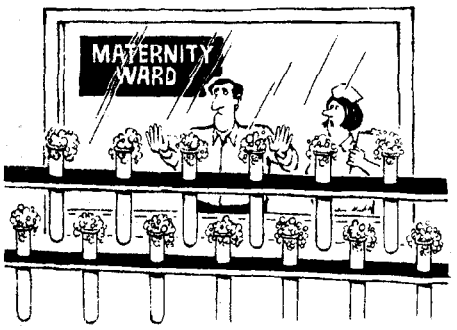

Fashioning the wanted child

EILEEN P. FLYNN

IN TIMES past, the Catholic lay person asked a complex question of ethical import and the trained moral theologian gave a precise answer without blinking an eye. Reflex certitude was especially likely when matters of sexual morality or procreative ethics were on the agenda. No fornication. No adultery. No birth control. No technological reproduction. These questions were open and shut. Of course, today as in the past, fornication and adultery are evaluated as morally wrong. However, some moralists are not willing to say that an incident of premarital intercouse involving engaged persons is necessarily a grave offense and objectively wrong. In addition, some would argue that intercourse between persons in an invalid marriage should not automatically be considered adulterous. In respect to artificial contraception, Pope John Paul II and conservative moralists continue to reiterate the traditional teaching, while dissent from *Humanae Vitae* goes on unabated. But perhaps it is in Catholic teaching on questions of technological reproduction that the subtle and difficult issues which are disputed in sexual morality stand out most starkly.

The gargantuan strides taken by the technology of reproduction present us with many ethical issues. The freezing of sperm which occurred more than a generation ago made it possible for any woman to choose to conceive with donor sperm. Today, the lavage method takes artificial insemination by donor (AID) a step further. A surrogate is inseminated with donor sperm and, within a week of her insemination, her uterus is flushed. If an embryo is located in the straining process, it is placed within the uterus of the sperm donor's wife. To date, two babies have been born following lavage therapy.

Human fertilization *in vitro* (IVF) can be employed to create embryos using a variety of combinations. Donor sperm and a donor ovum could form an embryo which could be transferred to the uterus of any woman. For women with genetic diseases, who are unwilling to reproduce using their own ova, IVF now opens the possibility of creating embryos with donor ova and (husband's) sperm which the bearer of the disease can personally carry to term. For women who are unable or unwilling to become pregnant, laboratory fertilization makes it possible to arrange for surrogates to carry their embryos.

Because of hormone therapy, many women in IVF programs produce several ova. Many embryos may result from laboratory insemination. One to four embryos are routinely transferred to the patient; extras are frozen. Surplus embryos can be thawed and transferred at later dates. The shelf life of a frozen embryo is not precisely known. But what should happen to a frozen embryo if the female genetic parent dies, or ages beyond the child-bearing years, or decides against motherhood? What *is* a frozen embryo, and what claims does this form of human life make upon those from whom it developed and upon society at large?

The simplest response to the reproductive revolution is to say that nature's way is the only ethical way to reproduce. To limit procreation to the act of intercourse has its advantages: it is clear and admits of no exceptions. Compassionate responses to infertility have included adopting children and encouraging a mature acceptance of physical limitation. But these may be unconvincing given the considerable emotional suffering of infertile married persons. When technology serves human needs it is ennobling. When technology enables married persons to conceive and bear their own children it seems to be working in concert with the human values ethics seeks to explicate and protect. However, techniques through which biological offspring come to be considered as some kind of impersonal product which can be assembled from components should be rejected. Reproductive technology has not made the institution of the family obsolete. On the contrary, contemporary possibilities are forcing this generation to come to a more reverent understanding of the emotional, biological, and spiritual relationships which constitute the family and bind members to one another.

A complex moral case recently came to the attention of the media. The particulars of this case show how difficult contemporary reproductive questions can be. The case involved Corinne Parpalaix who requested her dead husband's sperm so that she could try to become pregnant through artificial insemination. An obstacle was put in her way when the French sperm bank, Cecos, expressed reluctance to honor her request

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because her husband was deceased. The matter was resolved on August 1, 1984 when a Paris court ruled that Mrs. Parpalaix had a right to claim the sperm. The court concurred with the widow's lawyer who argued: "A deceased man has the right to breathe life into the womb of his wife and prove that love is stronger than death." In deciding the case, the French court said that sperm is "a human secretion that contains the seed of life and is destined to create a human being." Because the sperm which Mr. Parpalaix deposited was destined to be used for homologous artificial insemination, the court could identify no overriding reason to deny making the frozen ejaculate available to his widow. The court's deliberations involved wrestling with an unprecedented legal dispute; the court did not address the moral aspects of employing artificial insemination after the sperm donor-spouse had died. In view of the case of Corinne Parpalaix, it is interesting to speculate on the guidance Catholic moral teaching offers to individuals and society regarding the ethical aspects of artificial insemination, and morally responsible conduct in unusual cases such as this one.

Artificial insemination can be achieved using either the sperm of an inseminated woman's husband (AIH) or the sperm of an anonymous donor (AID). Over thirty years ago Pope Pius XII condemned both AIH and AID. Conservative theologians, such as William E. May, follow the magisterium and argue against ever employing AIH or AID. However, the church teaches not only through official channels of the magisterium, but is also dependent on the analytical reflection of moral theologians who evaluate the morality of new techniques, seeking to determine whether or not these procedures are consistent with human dignity. Today, the majority of moralists, the so-called revisionists — including Richard McCormick, Bernard Häring, and Philip Keane — reason that AIH is ethically acceptable, but do not approve AID. However, moral opposition to AID is not unanimous, and a few theologians, such as Louis Janssens and Charles Curran, would approve AID in certain cases.

DIFFERENCES of opinion about artificial insemination are based upon different understandings of the proper manner of procreating. Those who argue that any form of artificial intervention is immoral do so because they reason that human life should only be conceived through the joining of man and woman which occurs in sexual intercourse. They contend that the unity of two in one flesh is intensely personal, meaningful, and symbolically significant, and, therefore, is the sole means designed by God for the transmission of human life. The domestic hearth will suffer if it is sullied by the spirit of the experimental laboratory.

The majority of contemporary moral theologians writing today, however, reason that homologous insemination may be a legitimate means to biological parenthood for married spouses who are troubled by infertility. They admit that the manner in which conception occurs in AIH is less desirable than the interpersonal experience of coitus, but they do not think that the negative aspects of the interference are so substantial as to constitute a reason to prohibit the technique. The fact that the child conceived through AIH is the biological offspring of both its parents is a crucial reason for the acceptability of AIH. They reject the interpretation of natural law in which a stipulation is deduced from biological facticity or from the sacramental nature of marriage which proclaims that children should be conceived solely within the conjugal embrace. Moralists who favor AIH are impressed by the maturity and generosity of those spouses who place such a high value on their relationship and vocation to parenthood that they are willing to attempt conception through AIH.

Reaction to AID is much more reserved than reaction to AIH. The primary reason is that the child so-conceived would not be on the same terms with the biological mother and her spouse, the person most people would consider to be the father. Grave problems of self-identity could result for the child if the parents concealed the circumstances of conception or if the parents revealed these facts. In addition, the mother might fantasize about the identity of an anonymous donor, to the detriment of her relationship with her husband. And the husband, presumed to be the child's father, might have difficulty accepting a fatherly role vis-à-vis a child he did not really father. These possible problems notwithstanding, Louis Janssens has said that the positive aspects of the experience of choosing AID may supersede the lack of complete biological parenthood. Such positive aspects would include the mature and searching dialogue in which spouses might engage before coming to the AID decision, and their serious commitment to make parenthood work.

According to a Reuters' news release dated January 11, 1985, Corinne Parpalaix was inseminated with all available test tubes of her deceased husband's sperm on November 28, 1984, but the insemination did not result in a pregnancy. In spite of the fact that the case of Corinne Parpalaix is sadly closed, it is reasonable to ask what guidance Catholic moral theology might offer to other women who find themselves in similar circumstances.

When the husband is alive and well, there is no question that most Catholic moralists endorse AIH, even though the magisterial-conservative coalition is on record against the technique. But if the husband is dead this greatly complicates the problem for those who are open to AIH as remedy for infertility. On the one hand, it is inspirational that a widow might want to reincarnate her spouse's love by conceiving "his" child. She would be courageous in willingly assuming the responsibility of parenthood unaided by a spouse. On the other hand, how prudent would it be to defy the common wisdom by intentionally conceiving a child who will not begin life within the traditional family unit? A large percentage of children are born to unwed mothers, but for many reasons society considers these births ill-advised and tragic. And the overwhelming majority of these births are unplanned. However, in cases of widows desiring insemination with their dead husband's sperm, much energy and commitment would be invested in order to try to conceive children who would never know their fathers. Is it in the best interests of children to bring

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them into being to lessen a mother's grief, be a reminder of a dead spouse, or bring a dream to fulfillment? Ultimately, the moral response to these questions involves discerning in what wisdom consists. The most meaningful human experiences are central to this issue: love, parenthood, life, and death. A dead father's hope, a widow's desires, the best interests of a child who has not yet been conceived.

Cases such as that of Corinne Parpalaix are still unusual, but such difficult cases will probably not be solved by the application of abstract moral strictures which often are not convincing to ordinary people. Solomon knew that a loving mother would sooner give up her child than see her child deprived of life. Society-at-large, and ethics in particular, should attempt to enable widows like Mrs. Parpalaix, and others to whom technology holds the promise to solve their reproductive dilemmas, to understand the myriad repercussions of what pregnancy and parenting under such circumstances would entail. If moral theology responds to the reproductive technology of the 1980s by advocating discernment and caution, and by offering guidelines rather than prefabricated solutions or prohibitions, responsibility for profound ethical decisions will rest with very vulnerable people. But it seems that this is the role moral theology should be playing, given the complexity of the issues and the needs of moral decision-makers.

Screen

NEW AMSTERDAM

'HANNAH & HER SISTERS'

WOODY ALLEN the director has found a partial solution to the problem of Woody Allen the character. In *Hannah and Her Sisters*, he succeeds in displacing the focus of his filmmaking from his own character to another, just as he did last year in the fine *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. Instinctively, or on advice, Allen thus reduces the level of annoyingly narcissistic self-concern — all the more tedious since his cinematic self is so loquaciously convinced of inadequacy — that had become a fetish in earlier films. Allen is present in *Hannah* (he was absent in *Purple Rose*) but as only half of the story. He plays a hypochondriacal television producer who provides comic relief from a sororal soap opera featuring Mia Farrow as Hannah, with Barbara Hershey and Dianne Wiest as her sisters in — where else? — modern Manhattan.

I am by nature skeptical at coronations, so let me list the defects of the film not often mentioned in the praise that it is currently receiving. First, a simple problem concerns structure: Allen does not always manage to connect his character's story with the three sisters', and the plot often seems less juncture than fracture. More seriously, it's no accident that Allen here touches on a variety of incest in tracing the sisters' intertangled sex lives, which Allen and other men share on a kind of rotating basis. The plot of *Hannah and Her Sisters* thus simply literalizes the claustrophobic tone of all Woody Allen films. It is noteworthy that everyone in *Hannah* is either an actor, artist, or writer (except one accountant, a heavy); all the men, moreover, are losers or villains except for Allen's character. Such self-serving self-referentiality is not the hallmark of a comprehensive imagination.

Third, Allen's incestuous concern with Manhattan (although enjoying good film precedents in the 1930s' comedies that he reveres) aggravates by its parochialism and selectivity. Here we are treated to spotlessly photogenic scenes of New York streets and institutions — as though the city were really New Amsterdam and no one appreciates it more than Woody Allen. With a rare trace of garbage, blight, or humidity, *Hannah and Her Sisters* resembles an "I Love New York (City)" travel poster. Or maybe a lie. Or the absence of imagination of someone who experiences New York with the anesthesia fortune makes possible. If a director so glorified Southern California or Texas, imagine the howls from the myopic New York critics who so glorify Allen's work.

On a par with Allen's provincialism is his caricature of Catholicism, rooted in some warmed-over nonsense from the fifties dredged up on screen when his hypochondriacal character contemplates conversion. Allen's religious quest brings him to dry-as-dust monsignors and stores selling kitschy crucifixion art. Allen then sophomorically lampoons various philosophers on the "meaning of life," finally accepting Pascal's wager, but never mentioning it by name, as if he can't give religion any credit. On the other hand, it is quite possible, given the extraordinary limits of his Manhattanite parochialism, Allen doesn't know that religious thinking even exists. (For all of Allen's "soul-searching," incidentally, what his hypochondriac finally achieves is no more than deliguru: "the heart," he pompously proclaims, "is a very resilient muscle.")

Nevertheless, *Hannah* is worthwhile, often charming, and even moving. The story of the three sisters illustrates Allen's growing capacity to sympathize with women and present them in a genuine manner. The plot is a complicated trio of boy-meets-girl: Mia's (Hannah's) husband (unevenly played by Michael Caine) falls in love with Barbara Hershey, who lives with Max von Sydow (also heavy as a pedantic avant-garde artist). Allen, meanwhile, had been married to Mia, but was unable to have children — a fact handled with some gross comedy, but which had a serious impact on their eventual divorce. Having continued as amicable friends, Mia even sets him up with her ditzy, (failed) actress sister, Dianne Wiest, whose narrow eyes always convey benign bewilderment. The miracle is that from this confusing (and often self-indulgent) material, Allen creates a believable, gentle tale about family life that actually celebrates (at last) commitment.

What holds the material together? Some backbone provided by repeated scenes at Thanksgiving dinners, where Hannah's parents (the late Lloyd Nolan, and Maureen O'Sullivan, Mia Farrow's actual mother) provide an anchor, at least for common concern, among the daughters. Allen contributes some

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vaudeville one-liners in his scenes, which, now reduced in the screenplay, refresh rather than bore by repetition. The slight story is also magnificently edited: economic flashbacks provide key past family history; elliptical cuts sustain suspense; and the use of titles (on a blank screen between scenes) piques curiosity. The best involves a lovely line from e.e. cummings: "No one, not even the rain, has such small hands." The visual fulfillment of the line a few moments later is exquisite. But then Allen is at his best when honoring women.

No scene better achieves this than a difficult lunch between the three, where Allen's camera pans around the table in an unobtrusive but all inclusive manner. Barbara Hershey (whose affair with Caine is her secret) is convincingly racked by guilt; Dianne Wiest is at her nervous worst, having just been rejected at another audition; both regard their "earth mother" sister Farrow with fine sibling love/hate. Despite the contrived plot, when Allen concentrates on these tensions and on what sustains a family despite them, he nears a gold mine of genuine emotion. It is unfortunate he never quite explores it deeply. The family theme does include a fine surprise at the end, what one might even call a tear-jerker. Allen has always been a romantic ironist; the problem has been getting the two elements properly co-ordinated. The key to his growth toward success in that effort is the last scene, when he even has the grace to deny himself a last witty word. The younger Woody Allen would have wisecracked.

Hannah and Her Sisters is a hopeful sign. To make a better film, Allen must, to borrow a term from *The Right Stuff*, "push through the envelope." The family themes and feelings he touches on here could be explored far more profoundly. Allen has always idolized Ingmar Bergman; his imitation Bergman film, *Interiors*, sketched something of the same plot as *Hannah*, where von Sydow provides a Bergman echo. Indeed, some have suggested that *Hannah* is Allen's *Fanny and Alexander*. Real seriousness, even real comic seriousness like Chaplin's, however, involves more than inside references and insider movies. Allen still has to imagine his way into wider circles of experience. At present, he makes films for movie critics and New Yorkers. *Hannah* is the best of them.

TOM O'BRIEN

Books: THE LAST SUPERSTAR

REINHOLD NIEBUHR
A BIOGRAPHY
Richard Wightman Fox
Pantheon, $19.95, 340 pp.

Dennis P. McCann

REINHOLD NIEBUHR died fifteen years ago, and in the time since then, no religious figure, clerical or lay, theologian or social activist, has emerged to fill the vacuum that his death created, not only in the "mainstream churches" of Protestant Christianity but also in the so-called "vital center" of American politics.

Richard Fox's excellent biography of Niebuhr, besides presenting as much of the indispensable evidence for interpreting Niebuhr's life and thought as may ever be available, hints at some of the reasons why that vacuum may never again be filled. Just as most ordinary citizens, however intensely religious, have learned to be skeptical about pious politicians aspiring to the mantle of William Jennings Bryan, so the American "community of conscience" may be learning to live without the prickly comfort afforded by "intellectual preachers" like Reinhold Niebuhr. The world of rural "Christian America" that nurtured them no longer exists, but even more decisively, in various ways we have all been conspiring to destroy the kind of civic culture that would confer celebrity status on its would-be prophets. After contemplating Richard Fox's biography, I conclude that perhaps it's just as well. If mainstream Christianity is to continue to be a reforming influence in our pluralistic society, it will have to find another way.

Fox's biography of Niebuhr deserves all the favorable attention it has been getting in the secular press. Despite formidable obstacles, Fox clearly has done better research, more successfully penetrating Niebuhr's privacy and that of his family, than any previous study of his life and thought. His findings are well-organized and lucidly presented. At times his narrative is good enough to make a novelist jealous; such, for example, is the vivid portrait of the 1903 Chatauqua at Lincoln, Illinois, with which he begins his story. His judgments on Niebuhr's own books are anything but tendentious: he generally confirms what by now may be conventional academic wisdom that although Niebuhr wrote too much, too often, some of his works, like *Beyond Tragedy* (1937) and *The Irony of American History* (1951), deserve to be remembered as minor American classics. Yet, above all, Fox strives to create an account that does not simply rehash the history of Niebuhr's restless thinking about religion and politics.

By placing Niebuhr's thought in the

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context of his personal relationships with family and friends, as well as his shifting public commitments to various political causes, Fox for the first time sheds light on the extraordinary inner turmoil that animates Niebuhr's theology of paradox, his "Christian realism." His reading of Niebuhr's paradoxes is unexceptional: "He was a thoroughgoing naturalist despite his contempt for what he called 'naturalism' . . . a religious modernist devoted to biblical symbols; a political democrat infatuated with Burkean traditionalism; a skeptical relativist committed like William James to the life of passionate belief and moral struggle."

But what Fox discovered and persuasively argues is the extent to which these paradoxes reflect, but only partially resolve Niebuhr's deep, yet usually repressed, feelings about his father, the German immigrant pastor, Gustav; his brother, the Yale theologian, H. Richard Niebuhr; and the long-suffering women in his life, beginning with his mother and his sister, and including Ursula, his wife, and his friend and biographer, June Bingham. What emerges is the portrait of a compulsive workaholic, a modern circuit-rider whose willingness to deliver too many lectures, chair too many organizations, and edit too many journals, may have masked an unholy temptation to self-evasion, a compulsion to prove himself again and again in public while refusing to accept the gift of unmerited love in the privacy of family and friendship.

Like many public figures, then, Niebuhr was hard on his family and friends; but his unwillingness or inability to comprehend the irony of his private life must cast a shadow upon his theology — even the mature "Christian realism" of *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (1941, 1943). Though its doctrine of the anxious self, inevitably sinful and yet justified through grace "in principle" if not "in fact," may have been inspired by the sermon Niebuhr was continually preaching to himself, its very austerity may rest, not upon unflinching insight, but upon a refusal of genuine introspection. While the resulting paradoxical view of human nature and destiny was presented by Niebuhr as having virtually universal significance, in light of Fox's discoveries, it may more usefully be seen as symptomatic of the spiritual malaise specific to a certain type of self-consciously modern, successful urban character.

Feminists and liberation theologians who have criticized Niebuhr's "Christian realism" must surely find vindication here. For they have protested his tendency to exaggerate the pervasiveness of the sin of pride when its opposite, a lack of self-esteem, is a crippling affliction for so many urban men and women. Universalizing Niebuhr's insight into sin will only distort it; and if his doctrine of sacrificial love is unthinkingly sentimentalized, it may end up paralyzing the already poor in spirit and perpetuating the illusions of those restless souls who would escape from themselves through compulsive achievement.

But dispelling this shadow cannot be the last word on Niebuhr's mature theology. Fox's analysis suggests that Niebuhr's "Christian realism" is as close to repentance as an aggressive, self-made man, consumed by ambition, and ruthlessly unforgiving of personal weakness in himself and in others, is likely to get. For that sort of tough-minded, hard-boiled personality Niebuhr's preaching may still open the most accessible path toward self-knowledge. But how often anymore, even in the secular city, do we encounter such masterful men? What sort of culture are we creating, when the once impressive insights of "Christian realism" may appear to be as problematic as the vulnerable "tough guys" so effectively portrayed by Humphrey Bogart?

Are Niebuhr's works, like Bogie's movies, to be left to nostalgia buffs? As Fox himself points out in his Epilogue, Niebuhr "was not a man for all seasons." More tellingly, he suggests that "our intellectual gurus today are secular writers, academic popularizers, therapeutic counselors, psychological sages." Yet, surprisingly, he still commends Niebuhr's "Christian realism" as "a compelling model of the moral vocation." After having witnessed Fox expose something of the compulsions that drove Niebuhr on, one may be forgiven for wondering why the commendation.

In the end Fox lauds Niebuhr for insisting that "the moral life . . . [is] . . . not a restful state." Choosing "aggravation over tranquillity," Christian realism sees "the moral vocation" as "a continuous renegotiation of the balance between taking the world as it is and transforming it in the cause of justice." In a word, it must be a relentless assault on complacency, beginning with one's own. So far so good. But the conclusion that Fox fails to draw from his own discoveries is that this assault, when undertaken by the singular man, however heroic his Christian anti-heroism, exacts an appalling toll on those who are fated to love and nurture him. Yet ultimately, the heaviest toll may consist in the singular hero's failure to understand himself. So I say good riddance to theological celebrities. What we need are theological communities, if "Christian realism's" vision of the "moral vocation" is to be rescued from its own distortions.

Somehow the struggle against complacency must be lifted from the shoulders of the isolated prophet and placed within nurturing communities of faith. In the past decade or so, liberation theologies, whatever their faults, have rightly insisted that critical theological reflection is not the special preserve of the heroic individual, but the fruit of the whole community's collective struggle to bear witness to the Gospel. If theologians there still must be, let the community be empowered to speak through them, and not the other way round. In order to achieve this transformation, theologians will have to learn to work in teams, bringing a variety of gifts and interdisciplinary perspectives to the task of giving voice to the community. They will no longer be restless and rootless superstars, but familiar intellectuals organically rooted in the everyday concerns of the people whose faith they envision. Does this mean that theologians will no longer be able to address a national audience? Hardly. But it does mean that Niebuhr's vocation as the nation's "intellectual preacher" will most likely be inherited by very loose networks of more or less anonymous men and women capable of communicating the skills necessary for public discourse

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and of practicing the virtue of civility. Their work, if it bears fruit, will not restore a "Christian America"; but it will assist at the birth of what Martin Marty has called the "public church": a religious "communion of communions" that seeks to empower all its participants for an active role in the nation's public life and not just its celebrity theologians. Those who once may have hoped to imitate Niebuhr's personal achievement, of course, will be disappointed; but in light of Fox's discoveries regarding the toll exacted in achieving it, they may also be led to discover a more trustworthy foundation for "Christian realism."

The casual becomes perfect

THE COLLECTED PROSE

Elizabeth Bishop
Edited by Robert Giroux
Farrar Straus & Giroux, $17.50, $8.95 paper, 210 pp.

Margaret Wimsatt

ELIZABETH BISHOP is best known as a poet, with a spare, economical style that nevertheless can startle the reader by unexpected insight. Who, who has read "The Moose," can forget the giant shape looming by moonlight in the path of the bus? or, having read "The Fish," can forget that veteran, so majestic that the author, having hooked him, must throw him back into the sea? The prose pieces work the same way. All is smooth and easy, till the breath catches.

The table of contents is divided into "Memory: Persons and Places," and "Stories" but the separation is not sharp; reminiscence goes into the essays, biography into the fiction. The author uses scenes familiar to her, but perhaps exotic to her readers. She was born in Nova Scotia in 1911, and lived at Key West, in Mexico and California and London, and near the end of her life bought a house in Brazil. Geography stirred her from the time she was old enough to look at maps; it can be no coincidence that the titles of her collections of verse include *North and South*, *Questions of Travel*, and *Geography III*.

The longest piece in the book is "Efforts of Affection: A Memoir of Marianne Moore." An alert reader at Vassar College in the 1920s, Elizabeth was persuaded by the college librarian (Miss Fanny Borden: the tribute is typical) to go to New York to meet a still relatively unknown but already wary Miss Moore. Marianne set the appointment at a precise time, at one particular bench in the New York Public Library so that she might easily escape if her visitor proved uncongenial. Circuses were mentioned. They attended one together and a long friendship began. Miss Bishop writes only of what she herself observed and heard: of the old-fashioned, strong-minded Miss Moore, of the other poet's tastes and whims, of her treasured basket full of rejection slips, of their shared experiences. What emerges is surely one of the most endearing literary portraits ever achieved. One remembers the happy poem, "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore."

> From Brooklyn, over the Brooklyn
> Bridge, on this fine morning,
> Please come flying. . . .
> The flight is safe; the weather is all
> arranged.
> The waves are running in verses
> this fine morning.
> Please come flying.

The prose is effortless, almost reportorial, but the affection shines.

During one of her Brazilian stays, Miss Bishop was urged to look at a nineteenth-century diary, made into a cult item there by the admiration of Georges Bernanos, and warmly praised by all her friends. *Minha Vida de Menina* had been written and published under the pseudonym "Helena Morley" by a young, half-English girl who grew up in Diamantina in the mining province of Minas Gerais at the turn of the century; the Introduction is reprinted here. It is sympathetic, and also the result of sometimes rugged, but never tedious, travel and research. "Helena Morley" was still alive, with a proud husband eager to forward Bishop's project. This piece fits, in her work, with the Brazilian sections of *Questions of Travel* and her other translations from the Portuguese. It fits too with some of the shorter pieces in this book. "To the Botemquim and Back," and "A Trip to Vigia" show the same sharp eye and broad tolerance — tolerance for simple people and the dirt, and even for the often shabby or grotesque churches of a very poor country whose religion, like all others, she dismissed.

Some of the other essays and stories go back to a much earlier period of her life — as a small child in the village of Great Neck, Nova Scotia, where the coinage wore the face of King George V, and the anthem in school was "The Maple Leaf Forever." Her early history was tragic: her father dead in her infancy, her mother going permanently insane, and an abrupt uprooting from Nova Scotia to the home of her paternal grandparents in Worcester, Massachusetts. The shift is permanently in her mind. It is explored, for example, in "The Country Mouse," with its direct expression of self-pity: "It was like coasting downhill, this thought, only much worse, and it quickly smashed into a tree. *Why* was I a human being?"

Two stories stand apart as concrete and objective. "The Sea and Its Shore" about Edwin Boomer, hired to spear trash from the town beach at night, is lit by the gatherer's nightly bonfire, from which is saved scraps of writing to read by the lesser light of his lantern. ". . . an extremely picturesque scene, in some ways like a Rembrandt, but in many ways not." The other exploration of madness, "In Prison," describes a man obsessed by the need to control all the patterns around him: fields, cobblestone courtyards, walls, wallpaper. (This is evidence of the eye that made Elizabeth Bishop so good an amateur painter.) He quotes Hawthorne, but it is Poe who comes to mind. Since he has concluded that the only place this control might be possible is in a jail cell — for life — how will he achieve his ambition? Who will be his victim? A third story written in an objective voice, though many of the details are drawn from the Nova Scotia childhood is "In the Village," where selected facts and scenes are made into a poetic whole.

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The book has been lovingly edited and introduced by Robert Giroux, who acknowledges help from many of her friends. He wonders why she didn't collect and publish some of the pieces in her lifetime, but then remembers Robert Lowell's "For Elizabeth Bishop 4":

> Do you still hang your words in air,
> ten years unfinished, glued to your
> notice board, with gaps or empties
> for the unimaginable phrase — unerring Muse who makes the casual perfect?

In truth, it is an uneven collection, sometimes sentimental, sometimes raggedly written. If only for its best parts, it was worth printing. And the whole *is* a whole, probably the last we shall see of a much-loved and much-honored poet.

Marking time & place

A HISTORY OF ARCHITECTURE
SETTINGS AND RITUALS
Spiro Kostof
Oxford University, $45, $29.95 paper, 788 pp.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE NOW II
Barbaralee Diamonstein
Rizzoli, $25, 300 pp.

Jamake Highwater

THE WORLD changes constantly because our vision of it changes. In the most critical sense, we do not exist in the same cosmos that people existed in before the era of Copernicus and Galileo, and we do not live in the same world that people lived in before Columbus and the Age of Exploration. The reality of our day is essentially different from what people meant by reality before Einstein, Freud, and Marx. Such revolutionary awakenings into new worlds of meaning — new paradigms — are simply the most obvious twists and turns of Western philosophical history. It is, we must always remember, a history that the West writes for itself. Emerson summarized this epistemological situation when he said that "the whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind."

Like all elements of culture, architecture makes visible the reality in which we live. John Mitchell in *The Earth Spirit* perfectly focuses upon this intricate relationship between humankind and buildings: "The marks people make on the ground reflect the philosophy of the time . . . the groves and temples of Arcadia, the radiating avenues of the imperial center, the neatly ordered municipal garden, and the spoils and effluents of industrial rapacity, are each the product of a certain cosmology, a certain view of the nature of the universe and its relationship to men."

At its best, an exploration of architectural history should tell us something about the marks people make on the ground. Just such a purpose seems to impel *A History of Architecture: Settings and Rituals* by Spiro Kostof. "The history of architecture," he writes, "should try, before it is done, to look at buildings as palpable images of the values and aspirations of the societies that produced them."

What an exciting promise and what a fascinating sub-title! But, unfortunately, when I reached the last page of Mr. Kostof's highly praised 755-page text I felt that it was a promise largely unfulfilled. Rather than producing a work concerned with concepts and values, Kostof has given us a remarkably complete and intricate — if somewhat flatfooted — compilation of historical facts, described by his publisher as "a work which will become for architectural history what Janson has been and continues to be for art history."

Handsomely produced, expansive and authoritative, containing more than 950 excellent illustrations, *A History of Architecture* may, indeed, become the standard textbook for college survey courses on architecture. But I hope not. Architectural students are often inclined to seek information at the expense of ideas. They urgently need intellectual experience that challenges their vision and imagination rather than further surrounding them with an arsenal of transient facts that encourages them to ignore conceptual issues.

I could praise Spiro Kostof for many accomplishments in *A History of Architecture*, but my classroom experience indicates that his kind of informative book — like Janson's art history — can do more harm than good, by convincing students that they have been given a grasp of the humanities while all they really get is some random information that reinforces their remoteness from the actual *experience* of art.

There are people who assume that any emphasis upon the experiential nature of art automatically neglects its historical nature. Such people insist that humanistic thinking is soft and illogical, confusing metaphors with facts. It is possible, however, that such people have not truly demonstrated a real distinction between fact and metaphor. They have simply insisted that their own metaphors are "factual." Rather than looking at art history with the vision of those who live it, they tend ethnocentricly to make their own paradigms the measure of all experience, past and present. And thus, as mythologist Joseph Campbell has pointed out, they mistake the metaphor for the message. They mistake the menu for the meal. So more often than not they end up munching on cardboard.

Unfortunately, there is a good deal of cardboard in Spiro Kostof's 788-page book. And given its impressive range and inclusiveness and its devotion to facts, there are also a few unfortunate errors which may or may not reflect upon the general accuracy of the book. For instance, on page 435, Mr. Kostof tells us that Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico was the "great center of a people called the Toltecs . . . the noblest creation of Middle America until about 600." The Toltec didn't arrive in the Valley of Mexico until perhaps A.D. 700. Teotihuacan flourished between A.D. 300 and 700. Then, about A.D. 700, with the invasion of the Chichimec tribes, the great city suddenly declined. It was looted and burned, its people were driven off or massacred, and its immense cultural influence ceased. The Toltecs were one of the Chichimec peoples. Clearly they did not create Teotihuacan.

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In fact, most authorities speculate that it was the militant Toltecs who probably destroyed the city. I am also surprised to discover that Kostof's bibliography for his chapter on Neolithic Europe does not include the essential work of Colin Renfrew *(Before Civilization*, etc.), and excludes all mention of the landmark stone architecture of Sardinia.

If Kostof's *A History of Architecture* delivers less than it promises, another recent book on architecture provides far more intellectual excitement and artistic insight than its title suggests. *American Architecture Now II* by Barbaralee Diamonstein is a brilliant compilation of interviews with some of the most important architects on the American scene today. But it is not a chatty book about trends; nor a monument of carefully compiled facts. It is a look — to use Kostof's phrase — "at buildings as palpable images of the values and aspirations of the societies that produced them."

I share many of Paul Goldberger's views of Diamonstein's exceptional book; particularly when he states in his "Foreword" that "what this book reveals is that architects understand a lot more about their time, their culture, and even about their own designs than they usually let on . . . We see here a profession deeply aware of the social and historical context in which it works, determined to practice in neither a cultural nor an aesthetic vacuum." I also concur with Goldberger's notion that the twenty-seven interviews in *American Architecture Now II* do not tell us in so many words what the present state of architecture is or where the profession is going. But these interviews do tell us "far more about what architecture means at this instant in our history than many books that tackle such an issue head on."

The architects whose words fill the pages of this book constitute an eclectic group, because this is a time without orthodoxy despite a passionate interest in architecture. Therefore, none of the interviews reflects the conviction prevalent in the early days of modernism: the sense that architecture has an absolute and defined social and moral stance. Yet there is clearly a community of expression among these designers. They all speak out of an international context — insisting upon the importance of history to them. They also speak of "the necessity for buildings to communicate on a sensual as well as a cerebral level, and of the need to design buildings not as isolated objects but as elements of a larger urban whole."

American Architecture Now II makes it clear that today's architects have distinguished themselves from their immediate predecessors by the respect they insist upon giving the same works the modernists of the era of 1900-50 rejected. As Emilio Ambasz says: "Many architects . . . are engaged in an operation of recovering the memory of architecture. As you know, the modern movement started with the assumption that the evolution of a new man was possible. This new man would not remember the history of architecture. During the forty or fifty years that the modern movement lasted, in the hope of arriving at that magnificent promised land, we neglected all the lessons of history. At present many architects are interested in a recovery of those lessons."

Though the skyscraper remains the foremost American architectural form and symbol (Helmut Jahn attributes the vitality of U.S. architecture to the skyscraper), the major thrust of the current American architectural scene is marked by a dialogue between the future and the past, the new and the old. And such combining of innovation and tradition exists, increasingly, not only between different buildings but also within the design of single structures. In his articulate interview, Philip Johnson surveys the whole of twentieth-century architecture, grasping instantly the relationship between what we build and who we are and what we are becoming. His prophecy fully captures the essence of our time as it is made visible in our buildings. "We are entering an unbelievably glorious age of mélange, eclecticism, random choices, and leadership. It's impossible to pin it down, but it should be the greatest period architecture has ever seen."

The marks people make on the ground reflect the philosophy of the time. It is just as Emerson said: "The whole of nature is a metaphor of the human mind."

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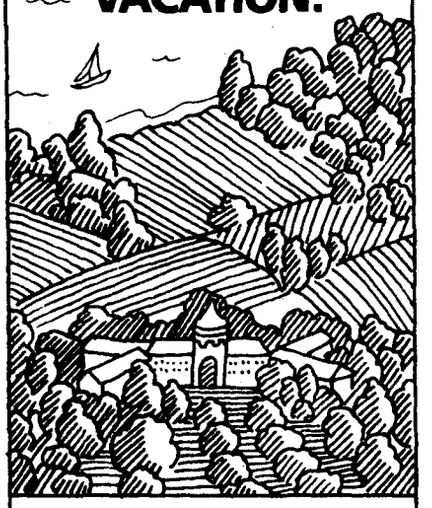

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Evidence for fame

COLLECTED STORIES

Tennessee Williams

New Directions, $19.95, 574 pp.

Robert Phillips

DID any major American artist suffer the abuse and neglect accorded Tennessee Williams? His last play to be well-received in this country was *The Night of the Iguana* — produced in 1961. After that, until his death in 1983, he could do nothing right in the critics' eyes. Yet the plays streamed forth: Over a dozen more full-length plays were unsuccessfully mounted. Even his own producers turned on him. When David Merrick closed down *The Red Devil Battery Sign* in its Boston try-out, a reporter called Mr. Merrick and asked if he'd closed the play for good. "No, I closed it for bad," was the reply.

Through all this, Tennessee Williams rose every morning and continued to write. What most don't realize is that, in addition to his plays, he wrote stories, and had done so since the late 1930s. Their copyright dates extend from 1939 to 1982. In his lifetime four story collections were published. But they were not noticed like the best and worst of his plays. Now, finally, we have his *Collected Stories* — a hefty volume of fifty pieces and nearly 600 pages. What it makes apparent is that had he written nothing else, Williams's stories would be sufficient evidence of his bid for fame.

The anonymous editor (who *did* do all the work of gathering and dating and annotating this book? No one is credited) has reprinted all the stories from the earlier four collections, plus uncollected and unpublished stories, including Williams's first published effort (in *Weird Tales*, at age seventeen). It should be said that Williams has not been entirely served by the inclusion of every story; some of the early ones are quite awful, and so is their prose ("Hushed were the streets of many peopled Thebes . . ."); some of the very last stories read like masturbatory daydreams ("Dear God, thought Stephen, you must have said *Let there be Clove* before you said *Let there be light*, because what this Arkansas Ozark kid is now unveiling equals or takes precedence over other works and wonders that You performed in Your six days of creation!" The exclamation point is Williams's. What Clove is unveiling is his "sexual parts." Another late story, "Miss Coynte of Green," is racist and sexist. Even Miss Coynte's surname is, I take it, intended as a crude pun.

But between the early and late stories there is an abundance of wonderful, moving, and original fiction. Williams began to hit his stride with "The Field of Blue Children" (1935), about seventy pages into the book. It is a portrait of the artist as a young poet, and deals with matters of art and love. "The Mysteries of the Joy Rio" is an authentic ghost story. "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" deals with the themes and characters of *The Glass Menagerie*, and is as successful a story as the play was a play. It is one of several attempts by Williams to portray the pathethic figure of his sister Rose.

Other stories prefigure plays: "The Night of the Iguana," "Three Players of a Summer Game," "Man Bring This Up Road," and "The Kingdom of Earth" are early versions and variations on *Iguana, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, and *The Seven Descents of Myrtle*. These often are quite different from the plays. It is as if, having created living characters, Williams could let them go on acting independently of any confines of plot. In "Three Players of a Summer Game," for instance, Gooper and his family, Big Mama and Big Daddy, are nowhere to be seen, and Maggie is relegated to a bit part. But Brick and his many problems are explored in a manner which just possibly surpasses the play. "For love I make characters," Williams once wrote, and his characters do exceed the boundaries of the boards or the page.

The Collected Stories reveal that Williams had several very different fictional modes — the nostalgic, the naturalistic, the comic, and the fantastic. Yet each is underpinned by the same piercing psychology, compassion, and black humor that marked his best theatrical works. This is a book I will keep and revisit. It belongs on the shelf with Eudora Welty's and Flannery O'Connor's collected stories. New Directions should be complimented for conceiving the book, for soliciting the personal introduction from Gore Vidal, and for producing such a handsome package. The Williams portrait by Andy Warhol which adorns the jacket strikes just the right note. The anonymous editor also found a previously uncollected intimate memoir, "The Man in the Overstuffed Chair," which is placed as a prologue. It goes a long way toward explaining the roots of Tennessee Williams's particular strange genius.

Smelling our smell

THEOLOGY FOR A NUCLEAR AGE

Gordon D. Kaufman

Westminster Press, $12.95, $8.95 paper, 78 pp.

Joan D. Chittister

IT'S hackneyed now, perhaps, but it gets truer every passing moment. The day after the atomic obliteration of Hiroshima everything changed. And nothing changed. Science was different. International relations were different. Nationalism was different. Political science was different. The future was different. But we all went on as if they weren't. Very little changed in school curriculums. Practically nothing changed in the way that one government dealt with another. Nationalism intensified and the U.N. floundered. The science and technology of death spread like a fungus across the country, and the small towns and fine minds and hard-working laborers who were touched by it never recognized the disease.

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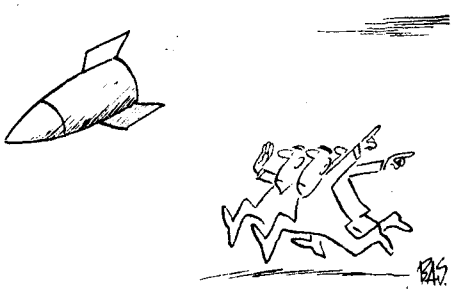
Now some people have begun to ask aloud how this terrible commitment to planetary suicide became the business of America, America's biggest business. How is it that we can now embark on the arming of outer space with no sense of its effect on the human soul, on human vision, on human development? How is it that we let this death-dealing situation get this far? And how is it that we seem unable, like lemmings on their way to the sea, to reverse the mad course we have set for ourselves? How is it that with all the fine ideals that we regularly repeat in our inauguration rituals we continually sink deeper and deeper to the level where torture racks and guillotines and mass slaughters look humane in comparison to the horrors that we now package and plan for the human race?

Gordon D. Kaufman, Mallinckrodt



Professor at Harvard Divinity School, in his book, *Theology for a Nuclear Age*, gives a studied, profound, and disturbing explanation. I recommend the book highly. No, I'm not simply recommending, I'm begging every minister, every priest, every theologian, every preacher and teacher of religion, every patient, bewildered, faithful person in the pew to read it. And talk about it. And think about it. Kaufman's point is that religion has to be different after Hiroshima, too, if we are to be true to our charge of dominion, if the principles of religion are to save the peoples and products of this planet, if creation is to be allowed to go on creating.

Kaufman's analysis of the effect of present religious interpretations and symbols is simple but profound. The religious images of a primitive people in distress are inadequate — in fact, counterproductive — to the needs of our own time, he contends. Our very images of God, Kaufman argues, obstruct our ability to confront, and change, a nuclear world. The notions of "Lord," and "King," of "avenging Judge," are precisely what makes it possible for us to live with and defend and design and die in nuclear sin.

Kaufman also deals directly with the religious assumptions of the past which he suggests are obscuring, even temporizing, the moral imperatives of the present. He points out that peoples of earlier ages saw the end of life as the fullness of time or an avenging salvation of a faithful remnant. Our situation is different. We must realize that for the first time in human history the end of the world must be recognized as a human act from which there can be no redemption of the just. We have, in fact, taken to ourselves the "power of life and death." To blame the act of impending planetary destruction on God is the depth of religious dishonesty which, if continued, makes a transformation of our human institutions and policies at least difficult if not impossible.

To religion falls the responsibility of

Star Wars?

. . . In a government beguiled by a landslide president, who must speak out? The opposition and the churches. Congress must not forget that once before public opinion forced Mr. Reagan back to Geneva when he showed no readiness to be there (1982). Those talks failed. So will the present Geneva parley unless every aspect to be discussed is really negotiable, including SDI. . . . Congress must convince the president that SDI as now envisioned is a well-meaning but hopeless crusade. It must continue to support the findings of its own Office of Technology Assessment, critical of SDI, and use the media to forcefully challenge the president's illusions. It must take the lead as true defenders of our life and liberty.

The churches must speak up, specifically the Catholic church and its bishops. . . . "The Challenge of Peace" provides the moral groundwork for condemning SDI. When will the bishops speak with full throat? And when will we? It is time for us all to sit down and count the cost.

Editorial, *Commonweal*, March 22, 1985

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shaping the ways in which we view the doom to which we have consigned ourselves: as God's will to purify the world or as our ultimate sin against creation.

Kaufman challenges the notion that the theological task is to hand on and hand down, basically unedited, the tradition as it has been interpreted in the past. The fact is that the present situation, the power of humans to destroy the human race and with it humankind's entire past, present, and future, was unimaginable in the past. Reconstruction and deconstruction, he insists, is the real task of contemporary theology.

Among the concepts to be reconstructed in this day, Kaufman contends, are our various images of God and the criteria for choosing between them. A worldview based on a concept of a God who uses people to fight the great struggle between good and evil legitimates national policies which poison the earth and threaten its peoples. "Kill a Commie for Christ" and "Armageddon Politics" fuel the political rhetoric of this country and engorge the "defense" budget beyond all sane argument. Russia becomes "the focus of all evil" in presidential speech and people raise their children to slaughter and be slaughtered "for God and country."

This father God, this king of kings and lord of hosts, is a God of War. God must be rethought, Kaufman concludes, in ecological terms, as an ultimate point of reference, as the substratum of life, not as ruling parent or warring Lord. To do less is to swing from pole to pole, from "God our Father will not let such a thing happen to us" to "God, the just judge, wills the destruction of this evil world," from apathy to apathy, from blind trust to blind rage, from benign militarism to malignant militarism. All of which are demonstrated in a history of Christian persecutions, the Crusades, the Inquisition, imperialism, and slavery. Jesus on the cross, Kaufman notes, is in tension with the medieval image of Jesus on the throne.

The end result of the work is to wonder who has been most made in whose image. We in God's or God in ours?

The value of the book is to make us rethink it all.

It's a small book, seventy-eight pages. It doesn't take a lot of time to read. It may take forever to forget. I recommend the discomfort.

DENNIS P. McCANN *is co-author, with Charles R. Strain, of* Polity and Praxis: A Program for American Practical Theology.

MARGARET WIMSATT *teaches in the English Department at the University of New Mexico.*

JAMAKE HIGHWATER *is assistant professor at the Graduate School of Architecture at Columbia University.*

ROBERT PHILLIP's Personal Accounts: New & Selected Poems, *will be published by Ontario Review Press in March.*

JOAN D. CHITTISTER, O.S.B., *has written and lectured on the peace pastoral and chaired a national taskforce on peacemaking in 1984.*

Correspondence

(Continued from page 130)

cian (in most cases more finitude than flaw), results in outcomes that are sometimes unavoidably unfortunate.

The facts are that we deal with an inexact science, wielded by practitioners who, even when good and conscientious, are not — cannot be — uniformly virtuosic. It is thus a chancy business, this encounter which most of us, at one time or another in our lives, must make with the health care system. In most bad outcomes it is possible, on hindsight, to find something that might have been done differently, and to find someone who would be willing to say that doing so would have made a difference. (It is as true, also, in cases with good outcomes, but here there is no incentive to ferret out ostensible lapses.) Even in the egregious cases that are the often cited — the apparently flagrant abuses — it is very difficult to be certain that the cited negligence was the cause of the bad outcome.

I do not wish for a moment to suggest that the profession is above blame or criticism. There is as much malfeasance and negligence in medicine as in other fields, but most of it is never found out, certainly not by the malpractice process. Seiden is right again when she notes that the system is more like a lottery than a reliable source of patient protection. Most of the truly negligent and incompetent practitioners are charming and persuasive charlatans, whose patients are

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Biblical Institute

21st Biblical Institute, Trinity College, Burlington, VT 05401, June 15-20, 1986. Faculty: Donald Senior, Carolyn Osiek, Roland Murphy, Bruce Metzger, Reginald Fuller, Joseph Cunneen. Write: Sister Miriam Ward.

Theology Workshop

22nd Theology Workshop, St. Mary's College, Moraga, CA 94575, June 16-20. Pheme Perkins: The Social and Moral World of St. Paul. Write: Br. Timothy McCarthy.

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grateful to them for whatever outcome, bad as well as good. Medicine has sociopaths like every other walk of life, though in medicine they are not selling the Brooklyn Bridge. If the malpractice system caught this damage, it might be seen to have a more redeeming face. But it doesn't.

The inefficiency of the apparatus, even when considered only as a means of compensating people who are victims of misfortune, is starkly emphasized by an analysis of the dollar flow through the system. At least half of all of the malpractice-related costs in the health care system represent dollars shunted into the legal system (e.g., court costs, attorneys on both sides), and another, though much smaller fraction, is consumed in administration. Probably as little as one-third of what is paid into the system, possibly even less, ever inures to the benefit of the damaged or injured person. I do not pretend for a moment that the legal profession has conspired to produce this result, but the sobering reality that its members are principal beneficiaries of the system does, at least, raise questions of conflict of interest and objectivity when attorneys speak in behalf of the current arrangement.

Finally, the size of the awards compensating an injured person or family for loss of income-generating potential are quite irrational and thus contribute unnecessarily to the cost crisis Seiden describes. They come about, I suspect, because of the incompetence of ordinary people (typical juries) to deal with complex technological financial matters, coupled with the contingent fee system which creates an incentive for the attorney to maximize the award. The facts are that a life-time income, adjusted to grow with inflation, can be guaranteed from relatively modest trust funds, constructed according to standard actuarial principles, applying precisely the same approaches that are used with our annuities and retirement funds. If the findings warrant compensation for loss of income, then it ought to be for the jury to say only that, not to do the calculation required to produce that lost income. They'll almost always do it wrong.

ROBERT P. HEANEY

Strength of agreement

Staten Island, N.Y.

To the Editors: Your commentary on the Anglo/Irish Agreement on Northern Ireland ["Etc.," November 29] was not illuminating. It couldn't possibly be in the few words you gave it. . . .

The Anglo/Irish Agreement will mean as much as the British government in Whitehall allows it to mean, and as the Irish government in Dublin will insist it means. If it is mere British tokenism, it will result in further radicalization of the minority in the North who increasingly have been voting for Sinn Fein. It is the increasing strength of Sinn Fein which caused Britain to make this Agreement with the Irish government. That threat, plus that of further alienating the Irish government and people, will probably cause the British to see that the proposals of the Irish government in the Conference are implemented. If they are not, there is little hope of a peaceful solution to the Irish issue.

JOHN BRANIGAN

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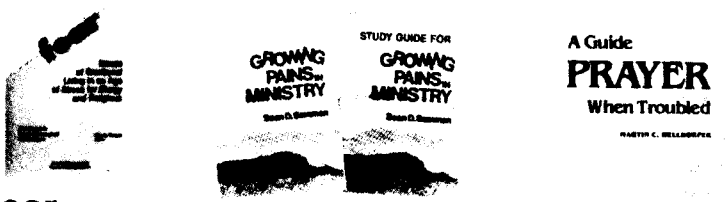

Fear *Marie Kraus, editor*

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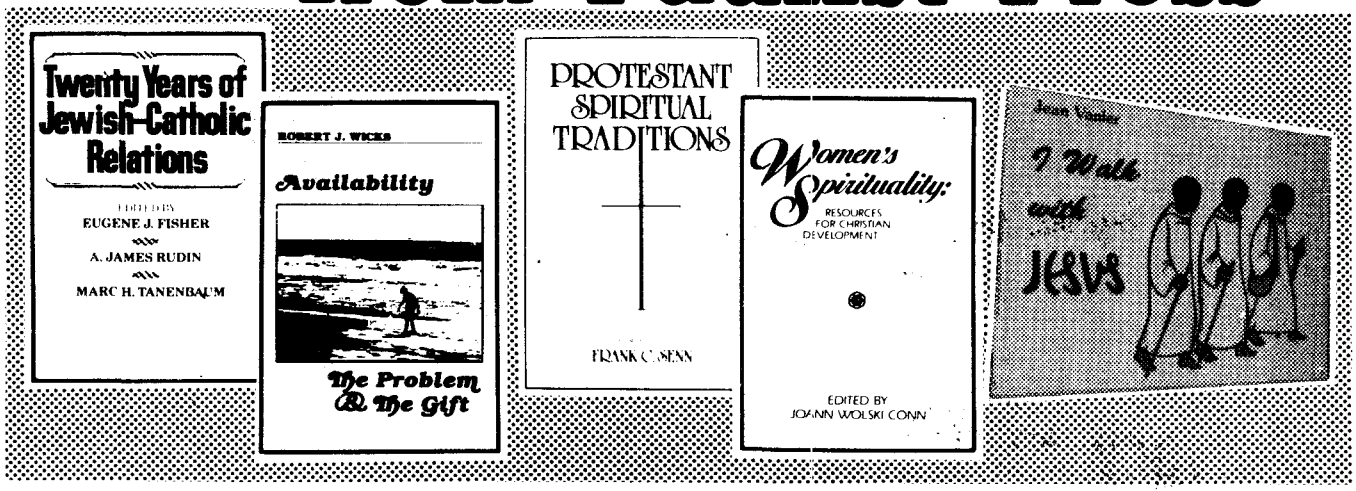

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